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ESSAYS

ESSAY ON THE PRINCIPLES OF
TRANSLATION
BY ALEXANDER FRASER TYTLER

ALEXANDER FRASER TYTLER, LORD
WOODHOUSELEE, was born at Edinburgh
in 1747. Called to the Bar at Edinburgh in
1770. In 1780 appointed Professor of
Universal History at Edinburgh. In 1790
became Judge-Advocate of Scotland and in
1801 was raised to the Bench as Lord Wood-
houselee. Died at Edinburgh in 1814.

ESSAY ON THE PRINCIPLES
OF TRANSLATION



ALEXANDER FRASER TYTLER

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INTRODUCTION

ALEXANDER FRASER TYTLER, LORD WOODHOUSELEE, author of the present essay on Translation, and of various works on Universal and on Local History, was one of that Edinburgh circle which was revolving when Sir Walter Scott was a young probationer. Tytler was born at Edinburgh, October 15, 1747, went to the High School there, and after two years at Kensington, under Elphinston—Dr. Johnson's Elphinston—entered Edinburgh University (where he afterwards became Professor of Universal History). He seems to have been Elphinston's favourite pupil, and to have particularly gratified his master, "the celebrated Dr. Jortin" too, by his Latin verse.

In 1770 he was called to the bar; in 1776 married a wife; in 1790 was appointed Judge-Advocate of Scotland; in 1792 became the master of Woodhouselee on the death of his father. Ten years later he was raised to the bench of the court of session, with his father's title—Lord Woodhouselee. But the law was only the professional background to his other avocation—of literature. Like his father, something of a personage at the Royal Society of Edinburgh, it was before its members that he read the papers which were afterwards cast into the present work. In them we have all that is still valid of his very considerable literary labours. Before it appeared, his effect on his younger contemporaries in Edinburgh had already been very marked—if we may judge by Lockhart. His encouragement undoubtedly helped to speed Scott on his way, especially into that German romantic region out of which a new Gothic breath was breathed on the Scottish thistle.

It was in 1790 that Tytler read in the Royal Society

his papers on Translation, and they were soon after published, without his name. Hardly had the work seen the light, than it led to a critical correspondence with Dr. Campbell, then Principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen. Dr. Campbell had at some time previous to this published his Translations of the Gospels, to which he had prefixed some observations upon the principles of translation. When Tytler's anonymous work appeared he was led to express some suspicion that the author might have borrowed from his Dissertation, without acknowledging the obligation. Thereupon Tytler instantly wrote to Dr. Campbell, acknowledging himself to be the author, and assuring him that the coincidence, such as it was, "was purely accidental, and that the name of Dr. Campbell's work had never reached him until his own had been composed. . . . There seems to me no wonder," he continued, "that two persons, moderately conversant in critical occupations, sitting down professedly to investigate the principles of this art, should hit upon the same principles, when in fact there are none other to hit upon, and the truth of these is acknowledged at their first enunciation. But in truth, the merit of this little essay (if it has any) does not, in my opinion, lie in these particulars. It lies in the establishment of those various subordinate rules and precepts which apply to the nicer parts and difficulties of the art of translation, in deducing those rules and precepts which carry not their own authority *in gremio*, from the general principles which are of acknowledged truth, and in proving and illustrating them by examples."

Tytler has here put his finger on one of the critical good services rendered by his book. But it has a further value now, and one that he could not quite foresee it was going to have. The essay is an admirably typical dissertation on the classic art of poetic translation, and of literary style, as the eighteenth century understood it; and even where it accepts Pope's Homer or Melmoth's Cicero in a

way that is impossible to us now, the test that is applied, and the difference between that test and our own, will be found, if not convincing, extremely suggestive. In fact, Tytler, while not a great critic, was a charming dilettante, and a man of exceeding taste; and something of that grace which he is said to have had personally is to be found lingering in these pages. Reading them, one learns as much by dissenting from some of his judgments as by subscribing to others. Woodhouselee, Lord Cockburn said, was not a Tusculum, but it was a country house with a fine tradition of culture, and its quondam master was a delightful host, with whom it was a memorable experience to spend an evening discussing the *Don Quixote* of Motteux and of Smollett, or how to capture the aroma of Virgil in an English medium, in the era before the Scottish prose Homer had changed the literary perspective north of the Tweed. It is sometimes said that the real art of poetic translation is still to seek, yet one of its most effective demonstrators was certainly Alexander Fraser Tytler, who died in 1814.

The following is his list of works -

Piscatory Eclogues, with other Poetical Miscellanies of Phineas Fletcher, illustrated with notes, critical and explanatory, 1771; The Decisions of the Court of Sessions, from its first Institution to the present Time, etc (supplementary volume to Lord Kames's "Dictionary of Decisions"), 1778, Plan and Outline of a Course of Lectures on Universal History, Ancient and Modern (delivered at Edinburgh), 1782, Elements of General History, Ancient and Modern (with table of Chronology and a comparative view of Ancient and Modern Geography), 2 vols, 1801. A third volume was added by F Nares, being a continuation to death of George III, 1822; further editions continued to be issued with continuations, and the work was finally brought down to the present time, and edited by G Bell, 1875; separate editions have appeared of the ancient and modern parts, and an abridged edition in 1809 by

T. D. Hincks To Vols. I. and II (1788, 1790) of the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh* Tytler contributed *History of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, *Life of Lord-President Dundas*, and *An Account of some Extraordinary Structures on the Tops of Hills in the Highlands*, etc ; to Vol V , *Remarks on a Mixed Species of Evidence in Matters of History*, 1805 ; *A Life of Sir John Gregory*, prefixed to an edition of the latter's works, 1788 ; *Essay on the Principles of Translations*, 1791, 1797 ; Third Edition, with additions and alterations, 1813 ; Translation of Schiller's "The Robbers," 1792 ; *A Critical Examination of Mr. Whitaker's Course of Hannibal over the Alps*, 1798, *A Dissertation on Final Causes*, with a *Life of Dr Derham*, in edition of the latter's works, 1798 ; *Ireland Profiting by Example, or the Question Considered whether Scotland has Gained or Lost by the Union*, 1799 ; *Essay on Military Law and the Practice of Courts-Martial*, 1800 ; *Remarks on the Writings and Genius of Ramsay* (preface to edition of works), 1800, 1851, 1866 ; *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Hon Henry Horne, Lord Kames*, 1807, 1814 ; *Essay on the Life and Character of Petrarch*, with Translation of Seven Sonnets, 1784 , *An Historical and Critical Essay on the Life and Character of Petrarch*, with a Translation of a few of his Sonnets (including the above pamphlet and the dissertation mentioned above in Vol V. of *Trans. Roy. Soc Edin*), 1812 ; *Consideration of the Present Political State of India*, etc., 1815, 1816 Tytler contributed to the "Mirror," 1779-80, and to the "Lounger," 1785-6

Life of Tytler, by Rev. Archibald Alison, *Trans. Roy Soc Edin.*

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ESSAY ON THE PRINCIPLES OF TRANSLATION

INTRODUCTION

THERE is perhaps no department of literature which has been less the object of cultivation, than the *Art of Translating*. Even among the ancients, who seem to have had a very just idea of its importance, and who have accordingly ranked it among the most useful branches of literary education, we meet with no attempt to unfold the principles of this art, or to reduce it to rules. In the works of Quintilian, of Cicero, and of the Younger Pliny, we find many passages which prove that these authors had made translation their peculiar study ; and, conscious themselves of its utility, they have strongly recommended the practice of it, as essential towards the formation both of a good writer and an accomplished orator.¹ But it is much to be

¹ *Vertere Græca in Latinum, veteres nostri oratores optimum judicabant. Id se Lucius Crassus, in illis Ciceronis de oratore libris, dicit factitasse. Id Cicero fuâ ipse personâ frequentissimè præcipit. Quin etiam libros Platonis atque Xenophontis edidit, hoc genere translatos. Id Messalæ placuit, multæque sunt ab eo scriptæ ad hunc modum orationes (Quintil. Inst. Orat. l. 10, c. 5).*

Utile imprimis, ut multi præcipiunt, vel ex Græco in

regretted, that they who were so eminently well qualified to furnish instruction in the art itself, have contributed little more to its advancement than by some general recommendations of its importance. If indeed time had spared to us any complete or finished specimens of translation from the hand of those great masters, it had been some compensation for the want of actual precepts, to have been able to have deduced them ourselves from those exquisite models. But of ancient translations the fragments that remain are so inconsiderable, and so much mutilated, that we can scarcely derive from them any advantage.¹

To the moderns the art of translation is of greater importance than it was to the ancients, in the same proportion that the great mass of ancient and of modern literature, accumulated up to the present times, bears to the general stock of learning in the most enlightened periods of antiquity. But it is a singular consideration, that under the daily experience of the advantages of good translations, in opening to us all the

Latinum, vel ex Latino vertere in Græcum: quo genere exercitationis, proprietas splendorque verborum, copia figurarum, vis explicandi, præterea imitatione optimorum, similia inveniendi facultas paratur: simul quæ legentem fefellissent, transferentem fugere non possunt (*Plin. Epist.* l. 7, ep. 7).

¹ There remain of Cicero's translations some fragments of the *Economics* of Xenophon, the *Timæus* of Plato, and part of a poetical version of the *Phænomena* of Aratus.

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stores of ancient knowledge, and creating a free intercourse of science and of literature between all modern nations, there should have been so little done towards the improvement of the art itself, by investigating its laws, or unfolding its principles. Unless a very short essay, published by M. D'Alembert, in his *Mélanges de Littérature, d'Histoire, &c.* as introductory to his translations of some pieces of Tacitus, and some remarks on translation by the Abbé Batteux, in his *Principes de la Littérature*, I have met with nothing that has been written professedly upon the subject.¹

¹ When the first edition of this Essay was published, the Author had not seen Dr. Campbell's new translation of the Gospels, a most elaborate and learned work, in one of the preliminary dissertations to which, that ingenious writer has treated professedly "Of the chief things to be attended to in translating." The general laws of the art as briefly laid down in the first part of that dissertation are individually the same with those contained in this Essay; a circumstance which, independently of that satisfaction which always arises from finding our opinions warranted by the concurring judgement of persons of distinguished ingenuity and taste, affords a strong presumption that those opinions are founded in nature and in common sense. Another work on the same subject had likewise escaped the Author's observation when he first published this Essay; an elegant poem on translation, by Mr. Francklin, the ingenious translator of Sophocles and Lucian. It is, however, rather an apology of the art, and a vindication of its just rank in the scale of literature, than a didactic work explanatory of its principles. But above all, the Author has to regret, that, in spite of his most diligent research, he has never yet been fortunate enough to meet with the work of a celebrated writer, professedly on the subject of translation, the treatise of M. Huet, Bishop of Avranches, *De optimo genere interpretandi*; of whose doctrines, however, he has some knowledge, from a pretty

The observations of M. D'Alembert, though extremely judicious, are too general to be considered as rules, or even principles of the art ; and the remarks of the Abbé Batteux are employed chiefly on what may be termed the Philosophy of Grammar, and seem to have for their principal object the ascertainment of the analogy that one language bears to another, or the pointing out of those circumstances of construction and arrangement in which languages either agree with, or differ from each other.¹

While such has been our ignorance of the principles of this art, it is not at all wonderful, that amidst the numberless translations which every day appear, both of the works of the ancients and moderns, there should be so few that are possessed of real merit. The utility of

full extract of his work in the *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique de Grammaire et Littérature*, article *Traduction*.

¹ Founding upon this principle, which he has by no means proved, That the arrangement of the Greek and Latin languages is the order of nature, and that the modern tongues ought never to deviate from that order, but for the sake of sense, perspicuity, or harmony ; he proceeds to lay down such rules as the following : That the periods of the translation should accord in all their parts with those of the original—that their order, and even their length, should be the same—that all conjunctions should be scrupulously preserved, as being the joints or articulations of the members—that all adverbs should be ranged next to the verb, &c. It may be confidently asserted, that the Translator who shall endeavour to conform himself to these rules, even with the licence allowed of sacrificing to sense, perspicuity, and harmony, will produce, on the whole, a very sorry composition, which will be far from reflecting a just picture of his original.

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translations is universally felt, and therefore there is a continual demand for them. But this very circumstance has thrown the practice of translation into mean and mercenary hands. It is a profession which, it is generally believed, may be exercised with a very small portion of genius or abilities.¹ "It seems to me," says Dryden, "that the true reason why we have so few versions that are tolerable, is, because there are so few who have all the talents requisite for translation, and that there is so little praise and small encouragement for so considerable a part of learning" (*Pref. to Ovid's Epistles*).

It must be owned, at the same time, that there *have been*, and that there *are* men of genius among the moderns who have vindicated the dignity of this art so ill-appreciated, and who have furnished us with excellent translations, both of the ancient classics, and of the productions of foreign writers of our own and of former ages. These works lay open a great field of useful criticism ; and from them it is certainly possible to draw the principles of that art which has never yet been methodised, and to establish

✓ ¹ Such is our pride, our folly, or our fate,
That few, but such as cannot write, translate.
Denham to Sir R. Fanshaw.

hands impure dispense
The sacred streams of ancient eloquence ;
Pedants assume the task for scholars fit,
And blockheads rise interpreters of wit.
Translation by Francklin.

6 * Principles of Translation

its rules and precepts. Towards this purpose, even the worst translations would have their utility, as in such a critical exercise, it would be equally necessary to illustrate defects as to exemplify perfections.

An attempt of this kind forms the subject of the following Essay, in which the Author solicits indulgence, both for the imperfections of his treatise, and perhaps for some errors of opinion. His apology for the first, is, that he does not pretend to exhaust the subject, or to treat it in all its amplitude, but only to point out the general principles of the art; and for the last, that in matters where the ultimate appeal is to Taste, it is almost impossible to be secure of the solidity of our opinions, when the criterion of their truth is so very uncertain.

CHAPTER I

DESCRIPTION OF A GOOD TRANSLATION — GENERAL RULES FLOWING FROM THAT DESCRIPTION

IF it were possible accurately to define, or, perhaps more properly, to describe what is meant by a *good Translation*, it is evident that a considerable progress would be made towards establishing the Rules of the *Art*; for these Rules would flow naturally from that definition or description. But there is no subject of criticism where there has been so much difference of opinion. (If the genius and character of all languages were the same, it would be an easy task to translate from one into another; nor would anything more be requisite on the part of the translator, than fidelity and attention. But as the genius and character of languages is confessedly very different, it has hence become a common opinion, that it is the duty of a translator to attend only to the sense and spirit of his original, to make himself perfectly master of his author's ideas, and to communicate them in those expressions which he judges to be best suited to convey them.) It has, on the other hand, been maintained, that, in order to constitute a perfect translation, it is not only

requisite that the ideas and sentiments of the original author should be conveyed, but likewise his style and manner of writing, which, it is supposed, cannot be done without a strict attention to the arrangement of his sentences, and even to their order and construction.¹ According to the former idea of translation, it is allowable to improve and to embellish; according to the latter, it is necessary to preserve even blemishes and defects; and to these must, likewise be superadded the harshness that must attend every copy in which the artist scrupulously studies to imitate the minutest lines or traces of his original.

As these two opinions form opposite extremes, it is not improbable that the point of perfection should be found between the two. I would therefore describe a good translation to be *That, in which the merit of the original work is so completely transfused into another language, as to be as distinctly apprehended, and as strongly*

¹ *Batteux de la Construction Oratoire*, par. 2, ch. 4. Such likewise appears to be the opinion of M. Huet: "*Optimum ergo illum esse dico interpretandi modum, quum auctoris sententiæ primum, deinde ipsis etiam, si ita fert utriusque linguæ facultas, verbis accuratissimè adhæret interpretæ, et nativum postremo auctoris characterem, quoad ejus fieri potest, adumbrat; idque unum studet, ut nulla cum detractatione imminutum, nullo additamento auctum, sed integrum, suique omni ex parte simillimum, perquam fideliter exhibeat.*—*Universè ergo verbum, de verbo exprimendum, et vocum etiam collocationem retinendam esse pronuncio, id modo per linguæ qua utitur interpretæ facultatem liceat*" (Huet de Interpretatione, lib. 1).

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felt, by a native of the country to which that language belongs, as it is by those who speak the language of the original work.)

Now, supposing this description to be a just one, which I think it is, let us examine what are the laws of translation which may be deduced from it.

It will follow,

I. That the Translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work.

II. That the style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original.

III. That the Translation should have all the ease of original composition.

Under each of these general laws of translation, are comprehended a variety of subordinate precepts, which I shall notice in their order, and which, as well as the general laws, I shall endeavour to prove, and to illustrate by examples.

CHAPTER II

FIRST GENERAL RULE—A TRANSLATION SHOULD GIVE A COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT OF THE IDEAS OF THE ORIGINAL WORK—KNOWLEDGE OF THE LANGUAGE OF THE ORIGINAL, AND ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE SUBJECT—EXAMPLES OF IMPERFECT TRANSLATION OF THE SENSE OF THE ORIGINAL—WHAT OUGHT TO BE THE CONDUCT OF A TRANSLATOR WHERE THE SENSE IS AMBIGUOUS

IN order that a translator may be enabled to give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work, it is indispensably necessary, that he should have a perfect knowledge of the language of the original, and a competent acquaintance with the subject of which it treats. If he is deficient in either of these requisites, he can never be certain of thoroughly comprehending the sense of his author. M. Folard is allowed to have been a great master of the art of war. He undertook to translate Polybius, and to give a commentary illustrating the ancient Tactic, and the practice of the Greeks and Romans in the attack and defence of fortified places. In this commentary, he endeavours to

shew, from the words of his author, and of other ancient writers, that the Greek and Roman engineers knew and practised almost every operation known to the moderns; and that, in particular, the mode of approach by parallels and trenches, was perfectly familiar to them, and in continual use. Unfortunately M. Folard had but a very slender knowledge of the Greek language, and was obliged to study his author through the medium of a translation, executed by a Benedictine monk,¹ who was entirely ignorant of the art of war. M. Guischart, a great military genius, and a thorough master of the Greek language, has shewn, that the work of Folard contains many capital misrepresentations of the sense of his author, in his account of the most important battles and sieges, and has demonstrated, that the complicated system formed by this writer of the ancient art of war, has no support from any of the ancient authors fairly interpreted.²

The extreme difficulty of translating from the works of the ancients, is most discernible to those who are best acquainted with the ancient languages. It is but a small part of the genius and powers of a language which is to be learnt from dictionaries and grammars. There are innumerable niceties, not only of construction and of idiom, but even in the signification of

¹ Dom Vincent Thuillier.

² *Memoires militaires de M. Guischart.*

words, which are discovered only by much reading, and critical attention.

A very learned author, and acute critic,¹ has, in treating "of the causes of the differences in languages," remarked, that a principal difficulty in the art of translating arises from this circumstance, "that there are certain words in every language which but imperfectly correspond to any of the words of other languages." Of this kind, he observes, are most of the terms relating to morals, to the passions, to matters of sentiment, or to the objects of the reflex and internal senses. Thus the Greek words *αρετη, σωφροσυνη, ελεος*, have not their sense precisely and perfectly conveyed by the Latin words *virtus, temperantia, misericordia*, and still less by the English words, *virtue, temperance, mercy*. The Latin word *virtus* is frequently synonymous to *valour*, a sense which it never bears in English. *Temperantia*, in Latin, implies moderation in every desire, and is defined by Cicero, *Moderatio cupiditatum rationi obediens*.² The English word *temperance*, in its ordinary use, is limited to moderation in eating and drinking.

Observe

The rule of not too much, by *Temperance* taught,
In what thou eat'st and drink'st.

Par. Lost, b. 11.

¹ Dr. George Campbell, *Preliminary Dissertations to a new Translation of the Gospels*.

² *Cic. de Fin.* l. 2.

It is true, that Spenser has used the term in its more extensive signification.

He calm'd his wrath with goodly *temperance*.

But no modern prose-writer authorises such extension of its meaning.

The following passage is quoted by the ingenious writer above mentioned, to shew, in the strongest manner, the extreme difficulty of apprehending the precise import of words of this order in dead languages: "*Ægritudo est opinio recens mali præsentis, in quo demitti contrahique animo rectum esse videatur. Ægritudini subjiciuntur angor, mæror, dolor, luctus; ærumna, afflictatio: angor est ægritudo premens, mæror ægritudo flebilis, ærumna ægritudo laboriosa, dolor ægritudo crucians, afflictatio ægritudo cum vexatione corporis, luctus ægritudo ex ejus qui carus fuerat, interitu acerbo.*"¹—"Let any one," says D'Alembert, "examine this passage with attention, and say honestly, whether, if he had not known of it, he would have had any idea of those nice shades of signification here marked, and whether he would not have been much embarrassed, had he been writing a dictionary, to distinguish, with accuracy, the words *ægritudo, mæror, dolor, angor, luctus, ærumna, afflictatio.*"

The fragments of Varro, *de Lingua Latina*, the treatises of Festus and of Nonius, the *Origines* of Isidorus Hispalensis, the work of Ausonius

¹ *Cic. Tusc. Quæst. l. 4.*

Popma, *de Differentiis Verborum*, the *Synonymes* of the Abbé Girard, and a short essay by Dr. Hill¹ on "the utility of defining synonymous terms," will furnish numberless instances of those very delicate shades of distinction in the signification of words, which nothing but the most intimate acquaintance with a language can teach; but without the knowledge of which distinctions in the original, and an equal power of discrimination of the corresponding terms of his own language, no translator can be said to possess the primary requisites for the task he undertakes.

But a translator, thoroughly master of the language, and competently acquainted with the subject, may yet fail to give a complete transcript of the ideas of his original author.

M. D'Alembert has favoured the public with some admirable translations from Tacitus; and it must be acknowledged, that he possessed every qualification requisite for the task he undertook. If, in the course of the following observations, I may have occasion to criticise any part of his writings, or those of other authors of equal celebrity, I avail myself of the just sentiment of M. Duclos, "*On peut toujours relever les défauts des grands hommes, et peut-être sont ils les seuls qui en soient dignes, et dont la critique soit utile*" (Duclos, *Pref. de l'Hist. de Louis XI.*).

Tacitus, in describing the conduct of *Piso* upon the death of Germanicus, says: *Pisonem*

¹ *Trans. of Royal Soc. of Edin.* vol. 3.

interim apud Coum insulam nuncius adsequitur, excessisse Germanicum (Tacit. An. lib. 2, c. 75). This passage is thus translated by M. D'Alembert, "Pison apprend, dans l'isle de Cos, la mort de Germanicus." In translating this passage, it is evident that M. D'Alembert has not given the complete sense of the original. The sense of Tacitus is, that Piso was overtaken on his voyage homeward, at the Isle of Cos, by a messenger, who informed him that Germanicus was dead. According to the French translator, we understand simply, that when Piso arrived at the Isle of Cos, he was informed that Germanicus was dead. We do not learn from this, that a messenger had followed him on his voyage to bring him this intelligence. The fact was, that Piso purposely lingered on his voyage homeward, expecting this very messenger who here overtook him. But, by M. D'Alembert's version it might be understood, that Germanicus had died in the island of Cos, and that Piso was informed of his death by the islanders immediately on his arrival. The passage is thus translated, with perfect precision, by D'Abblancourt: "Cependant Pison apprend la nouvelle de cette mort par un courier exprès, qui l'atteignit en l'isle de Cos."

After Piso had received intelligence of the death of Germanicus, he deliberated whether to proceed on his voyage to Rome, or to return immediately to Syria, and there put himself at the head of the legions. His son advised the

former measure ; but his friend Domitius Celest argued warmly for his return to the province, and urged, that all difficulties would give way to him, if he had once the command of the army, and had increased his force by new levies. *At si teneat exercitum, augeat vires, multa quæ provideri non possunt in melius casura* (An. l. 2, c. 77). This M. D'Alembert has translated, "Mais que s'il savoit se rendre redoutable à la tête des troupes, le hazard ameneroit des circonstances heureuses et imprévues." In the original passage, Domitius advises Piso to adopt two distinct measures ; the first, to obtain the command of the army, and the second, to increase his force by new levies. These two distinct measures are confounded together by the translator, nor is the sense of either of them accurately given ; for from the expression, "se rendre redoutable à la tête des troupes," we may understand, that Piso already had the command of the troops, and that all that was requisite, was to render himself formidable in that station, which he might do in various other ways than by increasing the levies.

Tacitus, speaking of the means by which Augustus obtained an absolute ascendancy over all ranks in the state, says, *Cùm cæteri nobilium, quanto quis servitio promptior, opibus et honoribus extollerentur* (An. l. 1, c. 2). This D'Alembert has translated, "Le reste des nobles trouvoit dans les richesses et dans les honneurs la récompense de l'esclavage." Here the translator has

but half expressed the meaning of his author, which is, that "the rest of the nobility were exalted to riches and honours, in proportion as Augustus found in them an aptitude and disposition to servitude:" or, as it is well translated by Mr. Murphy, "The leading men were raised to wealth and honours, in proportion to the alacrity with which they courted the yoke."¹

Cicero, in a letter to the Proconsul Philippus says, *Quod si Romæ te vidissem, coramque gratias egissem, quod tibi L. Egnatius familiarissimus meus absens, L. Oppius præsens curæ fuisset.* This passage is thus translated by Mr. Melmoth: "If I were in Rome, I should have waited upon you for this purpose in person, and in order likewise to make my acknowledgements to you for your favours to my friends Egnatius and Oppius." Here the sense is not completely rendered, as there is an omission of the meaning of the words *absens* and *præsens*.

Where the sense of an author is doubtful, and where more than one meaning can be given to the same passage or expression, (which, by the way, is always a defect in composition), the translator is called upon to exercise his judgement, and to select that meaning which is most consonant to the train of thought in the whole

¹ The excellent translation of Tacitus by Mr. Murphy had not appeared when the first edition of this Essay was published.

passage, or to the author's usual mode of thinking, and of expressing himself. To imitate the obscurity or ambiguity of the original, is a fault; and it is still a greater, to give more than one meaning, as D'Alembert has done in the beginning of the Preface of Tacitus. The original runs thus: *Urbem Romam a principio Reges habuere. Libertatem et consulatum L. Brutus instituit. Dictaturæ ad tempus sumebantur: neque Decemviralis potestas ultra biennium, neque Tribunorum militum consulare jus diu valuit.* The ambiguous sentence is, *Dictaturæ ad tempus sumebantur*; which may signify either "Dictators were chosen for a limited time," or "Dictators were chosen on particular occasions or emergencies." D'Alembert saw this ambiguity; but how did he remove the difficulty? Not by exercising his judgement in determining between the two different meanings, but by giving them both in his translation. "On croit au besoin des dictateurs passagers." Now, this double sense it was impossible that Tacitus should ever have intended to convey by the words *ad tempus*: and between the two meanings of which the words are susceptible, a very little critical judgement was requisite to decide. I know not that *ad tempus* is ever used in the sense of "for the occasion, or emergency." If this had been the author's meaning, he would probably have used either the words *ad occasionem*, or *pro re nata*. But even allowing the phrase to be susceptible

of this meaning,¹ it is not the meaning which Tacitus chose to give it in this passage. That the author meant that the Dictator was created for a limited time, is, I think, evident from the sentence immediately following, which is connected by the copulative *neque* with the preceding: *Dictaturæ ad tempus sumebantur: neque Decemviris potestas ultra biennium valuit*: "The office of Dictator was instituted for a limited time: nor did the power of the Decemvirs subsist beyond two years."

M. D'Alembert's translation of the concluding sentence of this chapter is censurable on the same account. Tacitus says, *Sed veteris populi Romani prospera vel adversa, claris scriptoribus memorata sunt; temporibusque Augusti dicendis non defuere decora ingenia, donec gliscente adulatione deterrerentur. Tiberii, Caiique, et Claudii, ac Neronis res, florentibus ipsis, ob metum falsæ: postquam occiderant, recentibus odiis compositæ sunt. Inde consilium mihi pauca de Augusto, et extrema tradere: mox Tiberii principatum, et cetera, sine ira et studio, quorum causas procul habeo*. Thus translated by D'Alembert: "Des auteurs illustres ont fait connoître la gloire et les malheurs de l'ancienne république; l'histoire

¹ Mr. Gordon has translated the words *ad tempus*, "in pressing emergencies;" and Mr. Murphy, "in sudden emergencies only." This sense is, therefore, probably warranted by good authorities. But it is evidently not the sense of the author in this passage, as the context sufficiently indicates.

même d'Auguste a été écrite par de grands génies, jusqu'aux tems ou la nécessité de flatter les condamna au silence. La crainte ménagea tant qu'ils vécurent, Tibere, Caius, Claude, et Néron ; des qu'ils ne furent plus, la haine toute récente les déchira. J'écrirai donc en peu de mots la fin du regne d'Auguste, puis celui de Tibere, et les suivans ; sans fiel et sans bassesse : mon caractere m'en éloigne, et les tems m'en dispensent." In the last part of this passage, the translator has given *two* different meanings to the same clause, *sine ira et studio, quorum causas procul habeo*, to which the author certainly meant to annex only *one* meaning ; and that, as I think, a different one from either of those expressed by the translator. To be clearly understood, I must give my own version of the whole passage. " The history of the ancient republic of Rome, both in its prosperous and in its adverse days, has been recorded by eminent authors : Even the reign of Augustus has been happily delineated, down to those times when the prevailing spirit of adulation put to silence every ingenuous writer. The annals of Tiberius, of Caligula, of Claudius, and of Nero, written while they were alive, were falsified from terror ; as were those histories composed after their death, from hatred to their recent memories. For this reason, I have resolved to attempt a short delineation of the latter part of the reign of Augustus ; and afterwards that of Tiberius, and of the succeeding princes ;

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conscious of perfect impartiality, as, from the remoteness of the events, I have no motive, either of odium or adulation." In the last clause of this sentence, I believe I have given the true version of *sine ira et studio, quorum causas procul habeo* : But if this be the true meaning of the author, M. D'Alembert has given two different meanings to the same sentence, and neither of them the true one : "sans fiel et sans bassesse : mon caractere m'en éloigne, et les tems m'en dispensent." According to the French translator, the historian pays a compliment first to his own character, and secondly, to the character of the times ; both of which he makes the pledges of his impartiality : but it is perfectly clear that Tacitus neither meant the one compliment nor the other ; but intended simply to say, that the remoteness of the events which he proposed to record, precluded every motive either of unfavourable prejudice or of adulation.

CHAPTER III

WHETHER IT IS ALLOWABLE FOR A TRANSLATOR TO ADD TO OR RETRENCH THE IDEAS OF THE ORIGINAL.—EXAMPLES OF THE USE AND ABUSE OF THIS LIBERTY

IF it is necessary that a translator should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work, it becomes a question, whether it is allowable in any case to add to the ideas of the original what may appear to give greater force or illustration ; or to take from them what may seem to weaken them from redundancy. To give a general answer to this question, I would say, that this liberty may be used, but with the greatest caution. It must be further observed, that the superadded idea shall have the most necessary connection with the original thought, and actually increase its force. And, on the other hand, that whenever an idea is cut off by the translator, it must be only such as is an accessory, and not a principal in the clause or sentence. It must likewise be confessedly redundant, so that its retrenchment shall not impair or weaken the original thought. Under these limitations, a translator may exercise his judgement, and assume to himself, in so far, the character of an original writer.

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It will be allowed, that in the following instance the translator, the elegant Vincent Bourne, has added a very beautiful idea, which, while it has a most natural connection with the original thought, greatly heightens its energy and tenderness. The two following stanzas are a part of the fine ballad of *Colin and Lucy*, by Tickell.

To-morrow in the church to wed,
Impatient both prepare ;
But know, fond maid, and know, false man,
That Lucy will be there.

There bear my corse, ye comrades, bear,
The bridegroom blithe to meet,
He in his wedding-trim so gay,
I in my winding-sheet.

Thus translated by Bourne :

Jungere cras dextræ dextram properatis uterque,
Et tardè interea creditis ire diem.
Credula quin virgo, juvenis quin perfide, uterque
Scite, quod et pacti Lucia testis erit.

Exangue, oh ! illuc, comites, deferte cadaver,
Qua semel, oh ! iterum congregiamur, ait ;
Vestibus ornatus sponsalibus ille, caputque
Ipsa sepulchrali vincta, pedesque stolâ.

In this translation, which is altogether excellent, it is evident, that there is one most beautiful idea superadded by Bourne, in the line *Qua semel, oh !* &c. ; which wonderfully improves upon the original thought. In the original, the

speaker, deeply impressed with the sense of her wrongs, has no other idea than to overwhelm her perjured lover with remorse at the moment of his approaching nuptials. In the translation, amidst this prevalent idea, the speaker all at once gives way to an involuntary burst of tenderness and affection, "Oh, let us meet once more, and for the last time!" *Semel, oh! iterum congregiamur, ait.*—It was only a man of exquisite feeling, who was capable of thus improving on so fine an original.¹

Achilles (in the first book of the *Iliad*), won by the persuasion of Minerva, resolves, though indignantly, to give up Briseis, and Patroclus is commanded to deliver her to the heralds of Agamemnon :

Ὡς φάτο· Πατροκλος δὲ φίλῳ ἐπεπείθεθ' ἑταίρῳ·
 Ἐκ δ' ἄγαγε κλισίης Βρισηίδα καλλιπαρῆον,
 Δῶκε δ' ἀγεῖν· τῷ δ' αὖτις ἵτην παρὰ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν·
 Ἥ δ' ἀέκουσ' ἅμα τοῖσι γυνὴ κίεν.

Ilias, A. 345.

"Thus he spoke. But Patroclus was obedient to his dear friend. He brought out the beautiful Briseis from the tent, and gave her to be carried away. They returned to the ships of the Greeks; but she unwillingly went, along with her attendants."

¹ There is a French translation of this ballad by Le Mierre, which, though not in all respects equal to that of Bourne, has yet a great deal of the tender simplicity of the original. See a few stanzas in the Appendix, No. I.

Patroclus now th' unwilling Beauty brought ;
She in soft sorrows, and in pensive thought,
Past silent, as the heralds held her hand,
And oft look'd back, slow moving o'er the strand.

POPE.

The ideas contained in the three last lines are not indeed expressed in the original, but they are implied in the word *αεκουσα* ; for she who goes unwillingly, will *move slowly*, and *oft look back*. The amplification highly improves the effect of the picture. It may be incidentally remarked, that the pause in the third line, *Past silent*, is admirably characteristic of the slow and hesitating motion which it describes.

In the poetical version of the 137th Psalm, by Arthur Johnston, a composition of classical elegance, there are several examples of ideas superadded by the translator, intimately connected with the original thoughts, and greatly heightening their energy and beauty.

Urbe procul Solymæ, fusi Babylonis ad undas
 Flevimus, et lachrymæ fluminis instar erant :
 Sacra Sion toties animo totiesque recursans,
 Materiem lachrymis præbuit usque novis.
 Desuetas saliceta lyras, et muta ferebant
 Nablia, servili non temeranda manu.
 Qui patria exegit, patriam qui subruit, hostis
 Pendula captivos sumere plectra jubet :
 Imperat et lætos, mediis in fletibus, hymnos,
 Quosque Sion cecinit, nunc taciturna ! modos.
 Ergone pacta Deo peregrinæ barbita genti
 Fas erit, et sacras prostituisset lyras ?

Ante meo, Solyme, quam tu de pectore cedas,
 Nesciat Hebræam tangere dextra chelyn.
 Te nisi tollat ovans unam super omnia, lingua
 Faucibus hærescat sidere tacta meis.
 Ne tibi noxa recens, scelerum Deus ultor ! Idumes
 Excidat, et Solymis perniciosa dies :
 Vertite, clamabant, fundo jam vertite templum,
 Tectaque montanis jam habitanda feris.
 Te quoque pœna manet, Babylon ! quibus astra lacessis
 Culmina mox fient, quod premis, æqua solo :
 Felicem, qui clade pari data damna rependet,
 Et feret ultrices in tua tecta faces !
 Felicem, quisquis scopulis illidet acutis
 Dulcia materno pignora rapta sinu !

I pass over the superadded idea in the second line, *lachrymæ fluminis instar erant*, because, bordering on the hyperbole, it derogates, in some degree, from the chaste simplicity of the original. To the simple fact, "We hanged our harps on the willows in the midst thereof," which is most poetically conveyed by *Desuetas saliceta lyras, et muta ferebant nablia*, is superadded all the force of sentiment in that beautiful expression, which so strongly paints the mixed emotions of a proud mind under the influence of poignant grief, heightened by shame, *servili non temeranda manu*. So likewise in the following stanza there is the noblest improvement of the sense of the original.

Imperat et lætos, mediis in fletibus, hymnos,
 Quosque Sion cecinit, *nunc taciturna* ! modos.

The reflection on the melancholy silence that

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now reigned on that sacred hill, "once vocal with their songs," is an additional thought, the force of which is better felt than it can be conveyed by words.

An ordinary translator sinks under the energy of his original: the man of genius frequently rises above it. Horace, arraigning the abuse of riches, makes the plain and honest Ofellus thus remonstrated with a wealthy Epicure (*Sat.* 2, b. 2).

Cur eget indignus quisquam te divite?

A question to the energy of which, it was not easy to add, but which has received the most spirited improvement from Mr. Pope:

How *dar'st* thou let one worthy man be poor?

An improvement is sometimes very happily made, by substituting figure and metaphor to simple sentiment; as in the following example, from Mr. Mason's excellent translation of Du Fresnoy's *Art of Painting*. In the original, the poet, treating of the merits of the antique statues, says:

queis posterior nil protulit ætas
Condignum, et non inferius longè, arte modoque.

This is a simple fact, in the perusal of which the reader is struck with nothing else but the truth of the assertion. Mark how in the translation the same truth is conveyed in one of the finest figures of poetry:

with reluctant gaze
To these the genius of succeeding days
Looks dazzled up, and, as their glories spread,
Hides in his mantle his diminish'd head.

In the two following lines, Horace inculcates a striking moral truth ; but the figure in which it is conveyed has nothing of dignity :

Pallida mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas
Regumque tures.

Malherbe has given to the same sentiment a high portion of tenderness, and even sublimity :

Le pauvre en sa cabane, où le chaume le couvre,
Est sujet à ses loix ;
Et la garde qui veille aux barrières du Louvre,
N'en défend pas nos rois.¹

Cicero writes thus to Trebatius, Ep. ad fam. lib. 7, ep. 17: *Tanquam enim syngrapham ad Imperatorem, non epistolam attulisses, sic pecuniâ ablatâ domum redire properabas: nec tibi in mentem veniebat, eos ipsos qui cum sygraphis venissent Alexandriam, nullum adhuc nummum auferre potuisse.* The passage is thus translated by Melmoth, b. 2, l. 12: "One would have imagined indeed, you had carried a bill of exchange upon Cæsar, instead of a letter of recommendation: As you seemed to think you

¹ From the modern allusion, *barrières du Louvre*, this passage, strictly speaking, falls under the description of imitation, rather than of translation. See *postea*, ch. xi.

had nothing more to do, than to receive your money, and to hasten home again. But money, my friend, is not so easily acquired; and I could name some of our acquaintance, who have been obliged to travel as far as Alexandria in pursuit of it, without having yet been able to obtain even their just demands." The expressions, "*money, my friend, is not so easily acquired,*" and "*I could name some of our acquaintance,*" are not to be found in the original; but they have an obvious connection with the ideas of the original: they increase their force, while, at the same time, they give ease and spirit to the whole passage.

I question much if a licence so unbounded as the following is justifiable, on the principle of giving either ease or spirit to the original.

In Lucian's Dialogue *Timon*, Gnathonides, after being beaten by Timon, says to him,

Αει φιλοσκώμμων συ γε' αλλα ποῦ το συμποσιον;
ὡς καινον τι σοι ασμα των νεοδιδακτων διθυραμβων ἤκω,
κομίζων.

"You were always fond of a joke—but where is the banquet? for I have brought you a new dithyrambic song, which I have lately learned."

In Dryden's *Lucian*, "translated by several eminent hands," this passage is thus translated: "Ah! Lord, Sir, I see you keep up your old merry humour still; you love dearly to rally and break a jest. Well, but have you got a

noble supper for us, and plenty of delicious inspiring claret? Hark ye, Timon, I've got a virgin-song for ye, just new composed, and smells of the gamut: 'Twill make your heart dance within you, old boy. A very pretty she-player, I vow to Gad, that I have an interest in, taught it me this morning."

There is both ease and spirit in this translation; but the licence which the translator has assumed, of superadding to the ideas of the original, is beyond all bounds.

An equal degree of judgement is requisite when the translator assumes the liberty of retrenching the ideas of the original.

After the fatal horse had been admitted within the walls of Troy, Virgil thus describes the coming on of that night which was to witness the destruction of the city:

*Vertitur interea cælum, et ruit oceano nox,
Involvens umbrâ magnâ terramque polumque,
Myrmidonumque dolos.*

The principal effect attributed to the night in this description, and certainly the most interesting, is its concealment of the treachery of the Greeks. Add to this, the beauty which the picture acquires from this association of natural with moral effects. How inexcusable then must Mr. Dryden appear, who, in his translation, has suppressed the *Myrmidonumque dolos* altogether?

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Mean time the rapid heav'ns roll'd down the light,
And on the shaded ocean rush'd the night :
Our men secure, &c.

Ogilby, with less of the spirit of poetry, has done more justice to the original :

Meanwhile night rose from sea, whose spreading
shade
Hides heaven and earth, and plots the Grecians laid.

Mr. Pope, in his translation of the *Iliad*, has, in the parting scene between Hector and Andromache (vi. 466), omitted a particular respecting the dress of the nurse, which he thought an impropriety in the picture. Homer says,

Ἀψ δ' ὁ παῖς πρὸς κόλπον ἔϋζωνοιο τιθηνῆς
Ἐκλυθη λαχων.

"The boy crying, threw himself back into the arms of his nurse, whose waist was elegantly girt." Mr. Pope, who has suppressed the epithet descriptive of the waist, has incurred on that account the censure of Mr. Melmoth, who says, "He has not touched the picture with that delicacy of pencil which graces the original, as he has entirely lost the beauty of one of the figures.—Though the hero and his son were designed to draw our principal attention, Homer intended likewise that we should cast a glance towards the nurse" (*Fitzosborne's Letters*, l. 43). If this was Homer's intention, he has, in my opinion, shewn less good taste in this instance

than his translator, who has, I think with much propriety, left out the compliment to the nurse's waist altogether. And this liberty of the translator was perfectly allowable; for Homer's epithets are often nothing more than mere expletives, or additional designations of his persons. They are always, it is true, significant of some principal attribute of the person ; but they are often applied by the poet in circumstances where the mention of that attribute is quite preposterous. It would shew very little judgment in a translator, who should honour Patroclus with the epithet of *godlike*, while he is blowing the fire to roast an ox ; or bestow on Agamemnon the designation of *King of many nations*, while he is helping Ajax to a large piece of the chine.

It were to be wished that Mr. Melmoth, who is certainly one of the best of the English translators, had always been equally scrupulous in retrenching the ideas of his author. Cicero thus superscribes one of his letters : *M. T. C. Terentiæ, et Pater suavissimæ filiæ Tulliolæ, Cicero matri et sorori S. D.* (Ep. Fam. l. 14, ep. 18). And another in this manner : *Tullius Terentiæ, et Pater Tulliolæ, duabus animis suis, et Cicero Matri optimæ, suavissimæ sorori* (lib. 14, ep. 14). Why are these addresses entirely sunk in the translation, and a naked title poorly substituted for them, "To Terentia and Tullia," and "To the same"? The addresses to these

letters give them their highest value, as they mark the warmth of the author's heart, and the strength of his conjugal and paternal affections.

In one of Pliny's Epistles, speaking of Regulus, he says, *Ut ipse mihi dixerit quum consuleret, quam citò sestertium sexcenties impleturus esset, invenisse se exta duplicata, quibus portendi millies et ducenties habiturum* (Plin. Ep. l. 2, ep. 20). Thus translated by Melmoth, "That he once told me, upon consulting the omens, to know how soon he should be worth sixty millions of sesterces, he found them so favourable to him as to portend that he should possess double that sum." Here a material part of the original idea is omitted; no less than that very circumstance upon which the omen turned, viz., that the entrails of the victim were double.

✓ Analogous to this liberty of adding to or retrenching from the ideas of the original, is the liberty which a translator may take of correcting what appears to him a careless or inaccurate expression of the original, where that inaccuracy seems materially to affect the sense. Tacitus says, when Tiberius was entreated to take upon him the government of the empire, *Ille variè disserebat, de magnitudine imperiî, suâ modestiâ* (An. l. 1, c. 11). Here the word *modestiâ* is improperly applied. The author could not mean to say, that Tiberius discoursed to the people about his own modesty. He wished that his discourse should seem to proceed from

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modesty ; but he did not talk to them about his modesty. D'Alembert saw this impropriety, and he has therefore well translated the passage : “ Il répondit par des discours généraux sur son peu de talent, et sur la grandeur de l'empire.”

A similar impropriety, not indeed affecting the sense, but offending against the dignity of the narrative, occurs in that passage where Tacitus relates, that Augustus, in the decline of life, after the death of Drusus, appointed his son Germanicus to the command of eight legions on the Rhine, *At, hercule, Germanicum Druso ortum octo apud Rhenum legionibus imposuit* (An. l. 1, c. 3). There was no occasion here for the historian swearing ; and though, to render the passage with strict fidelity, an English translator must have said, “ Augustus, Egad, gave Germanicus the son of Drusus the command of eight legions on the Rhine,” we cannot hesitate to say, that the simple fact is better announced without such embellishment.

CHAPTER IV

OF THE FREEDOM ALLOWED IN POETICAL
TRANSLATION.—PROGRESS OF POETICAL
TRANSLATION IN ENGLAND.—B. JONSON,
HOLIDAY, SANDYS, FANSHAW, DRYDEN.—
ROSCOMMON'S ESSAY ON TRANSLATED
VERSE.—POPE'S HOMER.

IN the preceding chapter, in treating of the liberty assumed by translators, of adding to, or retrenching from the ideas of the original, several examples have been given, where that liberty has been assumed with propriety both in prose composition and in poetry. In the latter, it is more peculiarly allowable. "I conceive it," says Sir John Denham, "a vulgar error in translating poets, to affect being *fidus interpres*. Let that care be with them who deal in matters of fact or matters of faith; but whosoever aims at it in poetry, as he attempts what is not required, so shall he never perform what he attempts; for it is not his business alone to translate language into language, but poesie into poesie; and poesie is of so subtle a spirit, that in pouring out of one language into another, it will all evaporate; and if a new spirit is not added in the transfusion, there will remain nothing but a *caput mortuum*" (Denham's *Preface to the second book of Virgil's Æneid*).

In poetical translation, the English writers of the 16th, and the greatest part of the 17th century, seem to have had no other care than (in Denham's phrase) to translate language into language, and to have placed their whole merit in presenting a literal and servile transcript of their original.

Ben Jonson, in his translation of Horace's *Art of Poetry*, has paid no attention to the judicious precept of the very poem he was translating :

*Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere, fidus
Interpres.*

Witness the following specimens, which will strongly illustrate Denham's judicious observations.

Mortalia facta peribunt ;
Nedum sermonum stet honos et gratia vivax.
Multa renascentur quæ jam cecidere, cadentque
Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet usus,
Quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi.
De Art. Poet.

All mortal deeds
Shall perish ; so far off it is the state
Or grace of speech should hope a lasting date.
Much phrase that now is dead shall be reviv'd,
And much shall die that now is nobly liv'd,
If custom please, at whose disposing will
The power and rule of speaking resteth still.
B. JONSON.

*Interdum tamen et vocem Comædia tollit,
Iratusque Chremes tumido delitigat ore,
Et Tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri.
Telephus et Peleus, cum pauper et exul uterque,
Projicit ampullas et sesquipedalia verba,
Si curat cor spectantis tetigisse querela.*

De Art. Poet.

Yet sometime doth the Comedy excite,
Her voice, and angry Chremes chafes outright,
With swelling throat, and oft the tragic wight
Complains in humble phrase. Both Telephus
And Peleus, if they seek to heart-strike us,
That are spectators, with their misery,
When they are poor and banish'd must throw by
Their bombard-phrase, and foot-and-half-foot words.
B. JONSON.

So, in B. Jonson's translations from the *Odes* and *Epodes* of Horace, besides the most servile adherence to the words, even the measure of the original is imitated.

Non me Lucrina juverint conchylia,
Magisve rhombus, aut scari,
Si quos Eois intonata fluctibus
Hyems ad hoc vertat mare :
Non Afra avis descendat in ventrem meum,
Non attagen Ionicus
Jucundior, quam lecta de pinguissimis
Oliva ramis arborum ;
Aut herba lapathi prata amantis, et gravi
Malvæ salubres corpori.

HOR. Epod. 2.

Not Lucrine oysters I could then more prize,
Nor turbot, nor bright golden eyes ;

If with east floods the winter troubled much
 Into our seas send any such :
 The Ionian god-wit, nor the ginny-hen
 Could not go down my belly then
 More sweet than olives that new-gathered be,
 From fattest branches of the tree,
 Or the herb sorrel that loves meadows still,
 Or mallows loosing bodies ill.

B. JONSON.

Of the same character for rigid fidelity, is the translation of *Juvenal* by Holiday, a writer of great learning, and even of critical acuteness, as the excellent commentary on his author fully shews.

*Omnibus in terris quæ sunt a Gadibus usque
 Auroram et Gangem, pauci dignoscere possunt
 Vera bona, atque illis multum diversa, remotâ
 Erroris nebulâ. Quid enim ratione timemus,
 Aut cupimus? quid tam dextro pede concipis, ut te
 Conatûs non pœniteat, votique peracti.
 Evertère domos totas optantibus ipsis
 Dii faciles.*

JUV. Sat. 10.

In all the world which between Cadiz lies
 And eastern Ganges, few there are so wise
 To know true good from feign'd, without all mist
 Of Error. For by Reason's rule what is't
 We fear or wish? What is't we e'er begun
 With foot so right, but we dislik'd it done?
 Whole houses th' easie gods have overthrown
 At their fond prayers that did the houses own.

HOLIDAY'S *Juvenal*.

There were, however, even in that age, some writers who manifested a better taste in poetical

translation. May, in his translation of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, and Sandys, in his *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, while they strictly adhered to the sense of their authors, and generally rendered line for line, have given to their versions both an ease of expression and a harmony of numbers, which approach them very near to original composition. The reason is, they have disdained to confine themselves to a literal interpretation, but have everywhere adapted their expression to the idiom of the language in which they wrote.

The following passage will give no unfavourable idea of the style and manner of May. In the ninth book of the *Pharsalia*, Cæsar, when in Asia, is led from curiosity to visit the plain of Troy :

Here fruitless trees, old oaks with putrefy'd
And sapless roots, the Trojan houses hide,
And temples of their Gods : all Troy's o'erspread
With bushes thick, her ruines ruined.
He sees the bridall grove Anchises lodg'd ;
Hesione's rock ; the cave where Paris judg'd ;
Where nymph Oenone play'd ; the place so fam'd
For Ganymedes' rape ; each stone is nam'd.
A little gliding stream, which Xanthus was,
Unknown he past, and in the lofty grass
Securely trode ; a Phrygian straight forbid
Him tread on Hector's dust ! (with ruins hid,
The stone retain'd no sacred memory.)
Respect you not great Hector's tomb, quoth he !
—O great and sacred work of poesy,
That free'st from fate, and giv'st eternity
To mortal wights ! But, Cæsar, envy not
Their living names, if Roman Muses aught

May promise thee, while Homer's honoured
 By future times, shall thou, and I, be read :
 No age shall us with darke oblivion staine,
 But our Pharsalia ever shall remain.

MAY'S *Lucan*, b. 9.

Jam silvæ steriles, et putres robore trunci
 Assaraci pressere domos, et templa deorum
 Jam lassa radice tenent ; ac tota teguntur
 Pergama dumetis ; etiam periæ ruinæ.
 Aspicit Hesiones scopulos, silvasque latentes
 Anchisæ thalamos ; quo judex sederit antro ;
 Unde puer raptus cælo ; quo vertice Nais
 Luserit Oenone : nullum est sine nomine saxum.
 Inscius in sicco serpentem pulvere rivum
 Transierat, qui Xanthus erat ; securus in alto
 Gramine ponebat gressus : Phryx incola manes
 Hectoreos calcare vetat : discussa jacebant
 Saxa, nec ullius faciem servantia sacri :
 Hectoreas, monstrator ait, non respicis aras ?
 O sacer, et magnus vatum labor ; omnia fato
 Eripis, et populis donas mortalibus ævum !
 Invidia sacræ, Cæsar, ne tangere famæ :
 Nam siquid Latii fas est promittere Musis,
 Quantum Smyrnei durabunt vatis honores,
 Venturi me teque legent : Pharsalia nostra
 Vivet, et a nullo tenebris damnabitur ævo.

Pharsal. l. 9.

Independently of the excellence of the above translation, in completely conveying the sense, the force, and spirit of the original, it possesses one beauty which the more modern English poets have entirely neglected, or rather purposely banished from their versification in rhyme ; I mean the varied harmony of the measure, which arises from changing the place of the pauses.

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In the modern heroic rhyme, the pause is almost invariably found at the end of a couplet. In the older poetry, the sense is continued from one couplet to another, and closes in various parts of the line, according to the poet's choice, and the completion of his meaning :

A little gliding stream, which Xanthus was,
Unknown he past—and in the lofty grass
Securely trode—a Phrygian straight forbid
Him tread on Hector's dust—with ruins hid,
The stone retain'd no sacred memory.

He must be greatly deficient in a musical ear, who does not prefer the varied harmony of the above lines to the uniform return of sound, and chiming measure of the following :

Here all that does of Xanthus stream remain,
Creeps a small brook along the dusty plain.
While careless and securely on they pass,
The Phrygian guide forbids to press the grass ;
This place, he said, for ever sacred keep,
For here the sacred bones of Hector sleep :
Then warns him to observe, where rudely cast,
Disjointed stones lay broken and defac'd.

ROWE'S *Lucan*.

Yet the *Pharsalia* by Rowe is, on the whole, one of the best of the modern translations of the classics. Though sometimes diffuse and paraphrastical, it is in general faithful to the sense of the original ; the language is animated, the verse correct and melodious ; and when we consider the extent of the work, it is not unjustly

characterised by Dr. Johnson, as "one of the greatest productions of English poetry."

Of similar character to the versification of May, though sometimes more harsh in its structure, is the poetry of Sandys :

There's no Alcyone ! none, none ! she died
 Together with her Ceyx. Silent be
 All sounds of comfort. These, these eyes did see
 My shipwrack't Lord. I knew him ; and my hands
 Thrust forth t' have held him : but no mortal bands
 Could force his stay. A ghost ! yet manifest,
 My husband's ghost : which, Oh, but ill express'd
 His forme and beautie, late divinely rare !
 Now pale and naked, with yet dropping haire :
 Here stood the miserable ! in this place :
 Here, here ! (and sought his aërie steps to trace).

SANDYS' *Ovid*, b. 11.

*Nulla est Alcyone, nulla est, ait : occidit una
 Cum Ceyce suo ; solantia tollite verba :
 Naufragus interiit ; vidi agnovique, manusque
 Ad discedentem, cupiens retinere, tetendi.
 Umbra fuit : sed et umbra tamen manifesta, virique
 Vera mei : non ille quidem, si quæris, habebat
 Assuetos vultus, nec quo prius ore nitebat.
 Pallentem, nudumque, et adhuc humente capillo,
 Infelix vidi : stetit hoc miserabilis ipso
 Ecce loco : (et quærit vestigia siqua supersint).*

Metam. l. 11.

In the above example, the *solantia tollite verba* is translated with peculiar felicity, "Silent be all sounds of comfort ;" as are these words, *Nec quo prius ore nitebat*, "Which, oh ! but ill express'd his forme and beautie." "No mortal bands could force his stay," has no strictly cor-

responding sentiment in the original. It is a happy amplification ; which shews that Sandys knew what freedom was allowed to a poetical translator, and could avail himself of it.

From the time of Sandys, who published his translation of the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid in 1626, there does not appear to have been much improvement in the art of translating poetry till the age of Dryden :¹ for though Sir John Denham has thought proper to pay a high compliment to Fanshaw on his translation of the *Pastor Fido*, terming him the inventor of "a new and nobler way"² of translation, we find nothing in that performance which should intitle it to more praise than the *Metamorphoses* by Sandys, and the *Pharsalia* by May.³

¹ In the poetical works of Milton, we find many noble imitations of detached passages of the ancient classics ; but there is nothing that can be termed a translation, unless an English version of Horace's *Ode to Pyrrha* ; which it is probable the author meant as a whimsical experiment of the effect of a strict conformity in English both to the expression and measure of the Latin. See this singular composition in the Appendix, No. 2.

² That servile path thou nobly dost decline,
Of tracing word by word, and line by line.
A new and nobler way thou dost pursue,
To make translations and translators too :
They but preserve the ashes, thou the flame ;
True to his sense, but truer to his fame.

DENHAM to Sir R. FANSHAW.

³ One of the best passages of Fanshaw's translation of the *Pastor Fido*, is the celebrated apostrophe to the spring—

But it was to Dryden that poetical translation owed a complete emancipation from her fetters ; and exulting in her new liberty, the danger now was, that she should run into the extreme of licentiousness. The followers of Dryden saw

Spring, the year's youth, fair mother of new flowers,
 New leaves, new loves, *drawn by the winged hours*,
 Thou art return'd ; but the felicity
 Thou brought'st me last is not return'd with thee.
 Thou art return'd ; but nought returns with thee,
 Save my lost joy's regretful memory.
 Thou art the self-same thing thou wert before,
 As fair and jocund : but I am no more
 The thing I was, so gracious in her sight,
Who is heaven's masterpiece and earth's delight.
 O bitter sweets of love ! far worse it is
 To lose than never to have tasted bliss.

O Primavera gioventu del anno,
 Bella madre di fiori,
 D'herbe novelle, e di novelli amori :
 Tu torni ben, ma teco,
 Non tornano i sereni,
 E fortunati di de le mie gioie !
 Tu torni ben, tu torni,
 Ma teco altro non torna
 Che del perduto mio caro tesoro
 La rimembranza misera e dolente.
 Tu quella se' tu quella,
 Ch'eri pur dianzi vezzosa e bella.
 Ma non son io già quel ch'un tempo fui,
 Sì caro a gli occhi altrui.
 O dolcezze amarissime d'amore !
 Quanto è più duro perdervi, che mai
 Non v'haver ò provate, ò possedute !

Pastor Fido, act 3, sc. 1.

In those parts of the English version which are marked in Italics, there is some attempt towards a freedom of translation ; but it is a freedom of which Sandys and May had long before given many happier specimens.

nothing so much to be emulated in his translations as the ease of his poetry: Fidelity was but a secondary object, and translation for a while was considered as synonymous with paraphrase. A judicious spirit of criticism was now wanting to prescribe bounds to this increasing licence, and to determine to what precise degree a poetical translator might assume to himself the character of an original writer. In that design, Roscommon wrote his *Essay on Translated Verse*; in which, in general, he has shewn great critical judgement; but proceeding, as all reformers, with rigour, he has, amidst many excellent precepts on the subject, laid down one rule, which every true poet (and such only should attempt to translate a poet) must consider as a very prejudicial restraint. After judiciously recommending to the translator, first to possess himself of the sense and meaning of his author, and then to imitate his manner and style, he thus prescribes a general rule,

Your author always will the best advise;
Fall when he falls, and when he rises, rise.

Far from adopting the former part of this maxim, I conceive it to be the duty of a poetical translator, never to suffer his original to fall. He must maintain with him a perpetual contest of genius; he must attend him in his highest flights, and soar, if he can, beyond him: and when he perceives, at any time, a diminution of

his powers, when he sees a drooping wing, he must raise him on his own pinions.¹ Homer has been judged by the best critics to fall at times beneath himself, and to offend, by introducing low images and puerile allusions. Yet how admirably is this defect veiled over, or altogether removed, by his translator Pope. In the beginning of the eighth book of the *Iliad*, Jupiter is introduced in great majesty, calling a council of the gods, and giving them a solemn charge to observe a strict neutrality between the Greeks and Trojans :

Ἦως μὲν κροκόπεπλος ἐκιδνατο πᾶσαν ἐπ' αἶαν·
 Ζεὺς δὲ θεῶν ἀγορὴν ποιήσατο τερπικέραunos,
 Ἀκροτάτῃ κορυφῇ πολυδαιραδος Οὐλύμποιο·
 Αὐτὸς δὲ σφ' ἀγόρευε, θεοὶ δ' ἅμα πάντες ἄκουον·

“Aurora with her saffron robe had spread re-

¹ I am happy to find this opinion, for which I have been blamed by some critics, supported by so respectable an authority as that of M. Delille ; whose translation of the *Georgics* of Virgil, though censurable, (as I shall remark) in a few particulars, is, on the whole, a very fine performance : “Il faut être quelquefois supérieur à son original, précisément parce qu'on lui est très-inférieur.” *Delille Disc. Prelim. d la Trad. des Georgiques*. Of the same opinion is the elegant author of the poem on Translation.

Unless an author like a mistress warms,
 How shall we *hide his faults*, or taste his charms ?
 How all his modest, latent beauties find ;
 How trace each lovelier feature of the mind ;
Soften each blemish, and *each grace improve*,
 And treat him with the dignity of love ?

FRANCKLIN.

turning light upon the world, when Jove delighting-in-thunder summoned a council of the gods upon the highest point of the many-headed Olympus ; and while he thus harangued, all the immortals listened with deep attention." This is a very solemn opening ; but the expectation of the reader is miserably disappointed by the harangue itself, of which I shall give a literal translation.

Κέκλυτέ μεν, πάντες τε θεοὶ, πᾶσαι τε θείαιαι,
 "Ὅφρ' εἴπω, τά με θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι κελεύει·
 Μήτε τις οὖν θήλεια θεὸς τόγε, μήτε τις ἄρσην
 Πειράτω διακέρσαι ἐμὸν ἔπος· ἀλλ' ἅμα πάντες
 Αἰνεῖτ', ὅφρα τάχιστα τελευτήσω τὰδε ἔργα.
 Ὀν δ' ἂν ἐγὼν ἀπάνευθε θεῶν ἐθέλοντα νοήσω
 Ἐλθόντ', ἧ Τρώεσσιν ἀρηγέμεν, ἧ Δαναοῖσι,
 Πληγείς οὐ κατα κόσμον ἔλευσεται Οὐλύμπόνδε·
 Ἡ μιν ἐλὼν ῥίψω ἐς Τάρταρον ἡρόεντα,
 Τῇλε μάλ', ἧχι βάθιστον ὑπο χθονός ἐστι βέρεθρον,
 Ἐνθα σιδήρειαί τε πύλαι καὶ χάλκεος οὐδὸς,
 Τόσσον ἔνερθ' Αἶδεω, ὅσον οὐρανός ἐστ' ἀπὸ γαίης·
 Γνώσεται ἔπειθ', ὅσον εἰμὶ θεῶν κάρτιστος ἀπάντων.
 Εἰ δ' ἄγε, πειρήσασθε θεοὶ, ἵνα εἴδετε πάντες,
 Σειρην χρυσεῖην ἐξ οὐρανόθεν κρεμάσαντες·
 Πάντες δ' ἐξάπτεσθε θεοὶ, πᾶσαι τε θείαιαι·
 Ἄλλ' οὐκ ἂν ἐρύσαιτ' ἐξ οὐρανόθεν πεδιόνδε
 Ζῆν' ὑπατον μῆστωρ' οὐδ' εἰ μάλα πολλὰ κάμοιτε.
 Ἄλλ' ὅτε δὴ καὶ ἐγὼ πρόφρων ἐθέλοιμι ἐρύσσαι,
 Αὐτῇ κεν γαίῃ ἐρύσαιμι, αὐτῇ τε θαλάσσῃ·
 Σειρην μὲν κεν ἔπειτα περὶ ῥίον Οὐλύμπιοιο
 Δημοαίμην· τὰ δέ κ' αὖτε μετήορα πάντα γένοιτο·
 Τόσσον ἐγὼ περὶ τ' εἰμὶ θεῶν, περὶ τ' εἰμὶ ἀνθρώπων.

"Hear me, all ye gods and goddesses, whilst I declare to you the dictates of my inmost heart.

Let neither male nor female of the gods attempt to controvert what I shall say ; but let all submissively assent, that I may speedily accomplish my undertakings : for whoever of you shall be found withdrawing to give aid either to the Trojans or Greeks, shall return to Olympus marked with dishonourable wounds ; or else I will seize him and hurl him down to gloomy Tartarus, where there is a deep dungeon under the earth, with gates of iron, and a threshold of brass, as far below hell, as the earth is below the heavens. Then he will know how much stronger I am than all the other gods. But come now, and make trial, that ye may all be convinced. Suspend a golden chain from heaven, and hang all by one end of it, with your whole weight, gods and goddesses together : you will never pull down from the heaven to the earth, Jupiter, the supreme counsellor, though you should strain with your utmost force. But when I chuse to pull, I will raise you all, with the earth and sea together, and fastening the chain to the top of Olympus, will keep you all suspended at it. So much am I superior both to gods and men."

It must be owned, that this speech is far beneath the dignity of the Thunderer ; that the braggart vaunting in the beginning of it is nauseous ; and that a mean and ludicrous picture is presented, by the whole group of gods and goddesses pulling at one end of

a chain, and Jupiter at the other. To veil these defects in a translation was difficult ;¹ but to give any degree of dignity to this speech required certainly most uncommon powers. Yet I am much mistaken, if Mr. Pope has not done so. I shall take the passage from the beginning :

Aurora now, fair daughter of the dawn,
Sprinkled with rosy light the dewy lawn,

¹ Witness the attempt of a translator of no ordinary ability.

Pulchra mari, crocea surgens in veste, per omnes
Fundebat sese terras Aurora : deorum
Summo concilium cœlo regnator habebat.
Cuncta silent : Solio ex alto sic Jupiter orsus.

Huc aures cuncti, mentesque advertite vestras,
Dique Deæque, loquar dum quæ fert corde voluntas,
Dicta probate omnes ; neve hinc præcidere quisquam
Speret posse aliquid, seu mas seu fœmina. Siquis
Auxilio veniens, dura inter prælia, Troas
Juverit, aut Danaos, fœde remeabit Olympum
Saucius : arreptumve obscura in Tartara longè
Demittam ipse manu jaciens ; immane barathrum
Altè ubi sub terram vasto descendit hiatu,
Orcum infra, quantum jacet infra sidera tellus :
Ære solum, æterno ferri stant robore portæ.
Quam cunctis melior sim Dis, tum denique discet.
Quin agite, atque meas jam nunc cognoscite vires,
Ingentem heic auro e solido religate catenam,
Deinde manus cuncti validas adhibete, trahentes
Ad terram : non ulla fuat vis tanta, laborque,
Cœlesti qui sede Jovem deducere possit.
Ast ego vos, terramque et magni cœrula ponti
Stagna traham, dextra attollens, et vertice Olympi
Suspendam : vacuo pendebunt æere cuncta.
Tantum supra homines mea vis, et numina supra est.

Ilias Lat. vers. express. a Raym. Cunighio, Rom. 1776.

When Jove conven'd the senate of the skies,
Where high Olympus' cloudy tops arise.
The fire of Gods his awful silence broke,
The heavens attentive, trembled as he spoke.

Celestial states, immortal gods ! give ear ;
Hear our decree, and reverence what ye hear ;
The fix'd decree, which not all heaven can move ;
Thou, fate ! fulfil it ; and, ye powers ! approve !
What God but enters yon forbidden field,
Who yields assistance, or but wills to yield,
Back to the skies with shame he shall be driven,
Gash'd with dishonest wounds, the scorn of Heaven ;
Or far, oh far, from steep Olympus thrown,
Low in the dark Tartarean gulph shall groan ;
With burning chains fix'd to the brazen floors,
And lock'd by hell's inexorable doors ;
As deep beneath th' infernal centre hurl'd,
As from that centre to th' ethereal world.
Let him who tempts me dread those dire abodes ;
And know th' Almighty is the God of gods.
League all your forces then, ye powr's above,
Join all, and try th' omnipotence of Jove :
Let down our golden everlasting chain,
Whose strong embrace holds Heav'n, and Earth,
and Main :
Strive all, of mortal and immortal birth,
To drag, by this, the Thunderer down to earth :
Ye strive in vain ! If I but stretch this hand,
I heave the gods, the ocean, and the land ;
I fix the chain to great Olympus' height,
And the vast world hangs trembling in my sight !
For such I reign, unbounded and above ;
And such are men and gods, compar'd to Jove !¹

It would be endless to point out all the

¹ See a translation of this passage by Hobbes, in the true spirit of the *Bathos*. Appendix, No. III.

instances in which Mr. Pope has improved both upon the thought and expression of his original. We find frequently in Homer, amidst the most striking beauties, some circumstances introduced which diminish the merit of the thought or of the description. In such instances, the good taste of the translator invariably covers the defect of the original, and often converts it into an additional beauty. Thus, in the simile in the beginning of the third book, there is one circumstance which offends against good taste.

Εντ' ορεος κορυφήσι Νότος κατεχευεν ὀμιχλὴν,
 Ποιμεσιν οὐτὶ φίλῃν, κλεπτή δὲ τε νυκτὸς ἀμεινω,
 Τόσσον τις τ' ἐπιλευσσει, ὅσον τ' ἐπὶ λαῶν ἦσιν'
 Ὡς ἄρα τῶν ὑπο ποσσὶ κονισσαλὸς ὠρνυτ' ἀέλλης
 Ἐρχομένων' μαλα δ' ὥκα διεπρησσον πεδίοιο.

"As when the south wind pours a thick cloud upon the tops of the mountains, whose shade is unpleasant to the shepherds, but more commodious to the thief than the night itself, and when the gloom is so intense, that one cannot see farther than he can throw a stone: So rose the dust under the feet of the Greeks marching silently to battle."

With what superior taste has the translator heightened this simile, and exchanged the offending circumstance for a beauty. The fault is in the third line; *τοσσον τις τ' ἐπιλευσσει*, &c., which is a mean idea, compared with

that which Mr. Pope has substituted in its stead :

Thus from his shaggy wings when Eurus sheds
A night of vapours round the mountain-heads,
Swift-gliding mists the dusky fields invade,
To thieves more grateful than the midnight shade ;
While scarce the swains their feeding flocks survey,
Lost and confus'd amidst the thicken'd day :
So wrapt in gath'ring dust the Grecian train,
A moving cloud, swept on and hid the plain.

In the ninth book of the *Iliad*, where Phœnix reminds Achilles of the care he had taken of him while an infant, one circumstance extremely mean, and even disgusting, is found in the original.

οτε δη σ'επ εμοισιν εγα γοννασσι καθισας,
Οψον τ' ασαιμι προταμων, και οινον επισχω.
Πολλακι μοι κατεδενσας επι στηθεσσι χιτωνα,
Οινου αποβλυζων εν νηπιεη αλεγεινη.

“ When I placed you before my knees, I filled you full with meat, and gave you wine, which you often vomited upon my bosom, and stained my clothes, in your troublesome infancy.” The English reader certainly feels an obligation to the translator for sinking altogether this nauseous image, which, instead of heightening the picture, greatly debases it :

Thy infant breast a like affection show'd,
Still in my arms, an ever pleasing load ;
Or at my knee, by Phœnix would'st thou stand,
No food was grateful but from Phœnix hand :

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I pass my watchings o'er thy helpless years,
The tender labours, the compliant cares.¹

POPE.

But even the highest beauties of the original receive additional lustre from this admirable translator.

A striking example of this kind has been remarked by Mr. Melmoth.² It is the trans-

¹ A similar instance of good taste occurs in the following translation of an epigram of Martial, where the indelicacy of the original is admirably corrected, and the sense at the same time is perfectly preserved :

*Vis fieri liber ? mentiris, Maxime, non vis :
Sed fieri si vis, hac ratione potes.
Liber eris, cœnare foris, si, Maxime, nolis :
Veientana tuam si domat uva sitim :
Si ridere potes miseri Chrysendeta Cinnæ :
Contentus nostrâ si potes esse togâ.
Si plebeia Venus gemino tibi vincitur asse :
Si tua non rectus tecta subire potes :
Hæc tibi si vis est, si mentis tanta potestas,
Liberior Partho vivere rege potes.*

MART. lib. 2, ep. 53.

Non, d'être libre, cher Paulin,
Vous n'avez jamais eu l'envie ;
Entre nous, votre train de vie
N'en est point du tout le chemin.

Il vous faut grand'chère, bon vin,
Grand jeu, nombreuse compagnie,
Maitresse fringante et jolie,
Et robe du drap le plus fin.

Il faudroit aimer, au contraire,
Vin commun, petit ordinaire,
Habit simple, un ou deux amis ;
Jamais de jeu, point d'Amarante :
Voyez si le parti vous tente,
La liberté n'est qu' à ce prix.

¹ Fitzosborne's *Letters*, l. 19.

lation of that picture in the end of the eighth book of the *Iliad*, which Eustathius esteemed the finest night-piece that could be found in poetry :

Ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἐν οὐρανῷ ἀστρα φαεινὴν ἀμφὶ σελήνην,
 φαίνεται ἄριπρεπεία, ὅτε τ' ἐπλετο νήνεμος αἰθήρ,
 *Ἐκ τ' ἔφανον πᾶσαι σκοπιαί, καὶ πρόονες ἄκροι,
 Καὶ νάπαι· οὐρανόθεν δ' ἄρ' ὑπερβάλλῃ ἄσπετος αἰθήρ,
 Πάντα δέ τ' εἶδεται ἄστρα· γέγηθε δέ τε φρένα ποιμήν·

“As when the resplendent moon appears in the serene canopy of the heavens, surrounded with beautiful stars, when every breath of air is hush'd, when the high watch-towers, the hills, and woods, are distinctly seen; when the sky appears to open to the sight in all its boundless extent; and when the shepherd's heart is delighted within him.” How nobly is this picture raised and improved by Mr. Pope!

As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
 O'er heav'n's clear azure spreads her sacred light :
 When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
 And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene ;
 Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
 And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole :
 O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
 And tip with silver every mountain's head :
 Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,
 A flood of glory bursts from all the skies :
 The conscious swains rejoicing in the sight,
 Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light. ¹

¹ Thus likewise translated with great beauty of poetry, and sufficient fidelity to the original :

Ut lunam circa fulgent cum lucida pulchro
 Astra choro, nusquam cœlo dum nubila, nusquam

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These passages from Pope's *Homer* afford examples of a translator's improvement of his original, by a happy amplification and embellishment of his imagery, or by the judicious correction of defects ; but to fix the precise degree to which this amplification, this embellishment, and this liberty of correction, may extend, requires a great exertion of judgement. It may be useful to remark some instances of the want of this judgement.

It is always a fault when the translator adds to the sentiment of the original author, what does not strictly accord with his characteristic mode of thinking, or expressing himself.

Pone sub curru nimium propinqui
Solis, in terrâ domibus negatâ ;
Dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo,
Dulce loquentem.

HOR. *Od.* 22, l. 1.

Thus translated by Roscommon :

The burning zone, the frozen isles,
Shall hear me sing of Celia's smiles ;
All cold, but in her breast, I will despise,
And dare all heat, but that in Celia's eyes.

Aerios turbant ventorum flamina campos ;
Apparent speculæ, nemoroso et vertice montes
Frondiferi et saltus ; late se fulgidus æther
Pandit in immensum, penitusque abstrusa remoto
Signa polo produnt longe sese omnia ; gaudet
Visa tuens, hæretque immoto lumine pastor.

Ilias Lat. vers. a Raym. Cunighio, Rom. 1776.

The witty ideas in the two last lines are foreign to the original ; and the addition of these is quite unjustifiable, as they belong to a quaint species of wit, of which the writings of Horace afford no example.

Equally faulty, therefore, is Cowley's translation of a passage in the *Ode to Pyrrha* :

Qui semper vacuum, semper amabilem
Sperat, nescius auræ fallacis.

He sees thee gentle, fair, and gay,
And trusts the faithless April of thy May.

As is the same author's version of that passage, which is characterised by its beautiful simplicity.

somnus agrestium
Lenis virorum non humiles domos
Fastidit, umbrosamque ripam,
Non zephyris agitata Tempe.

HOR. 3, 1.

Sleep is a god, too proud to wait on palaces,
And yet so humble too, as not to scorn
The meanest country cottages ;
This poppy grows among the corn.
The Halcyon Sleep will never build his nest
In any stormy breast :
'Tis not enough that he does find
Clouds and darkness in their mind ;
Darkness but half his work will do,
'Tis not enough ; he must find quiet too.

Here is a profusion of wit, and poetic imagery ; but the whole is quite opposite to the character of the original.

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Congreve is guilty of a similar impropriety in translating

Vides, ut alta stet nive candidum
Soracte : nec jam sustineant onus
Sylvæ laborantes.

HOR. i. 9.

Bless me, 'tis cold ! how chill the air !
How naked does the world appear !
Behold the mountain tops around,
As if with fur of ermine crown'd :
And lo ! how by degrees,
The universal mantle hides the trees,
In hoary flakes which downward fly,
As if it were the autumn of the sky,
Whose fall of leaf would theirs supply :
Trembling the groves sustain the weight, and bow,
Like aged limbs which feebly go,
Beneath a venerable head of snow.

No author of real genius is more censurable
on this score than Dryden.

Obsidere alii telis angusta viarum
Oppositi : stat ferri acies mucrone corusco
Stricta parata neci.

Æneis, ii. 322.

Thus translated by Dryden :

To several posts their parties they divide,
Some block the narrow streets, some scour the wide :
The bold they kill, th' unwary they surprise ;
Who fights finds death, and death finds him who
flies.

Of these four lines, there are scarcely more
than four words which are warranted by the

original. "Some block the narrow streets." Even this is a faulty translation of *Obsidere alii telis angusta viarum* ; but it fails on the score of mutilation, not redundancy. The rest of the ideas which compose these four lines, are the original property of the translator ; and the antithetical witticism in the concluding line, is far beneath the chaste simplicity of Virgil.

The same author, Virgil, in describing a pestilential disorder among the cattle, gives the following beautiful picture, which, as an ingenious writer justly remarks,¹ has every excellence that can belong to descriptive poetry :

Ecce autem duro fumans sub vomere taurus
Concidit, et mixtum spumis vomit ore cruorem,
Extremosque ciet gemitus. It tristis arator,
Mœrentem abjungens fraterna morte juvencum,
Atque opere in medio defixa relinquit aratra.

Which Mr. Dryden thus translates :

The steer who to the yoke was bred to bow,
(Studios of tillage and the crooked plow),
Falls down and dies ; and dying, spews a flood
Of foamy madness, mixed with clotted blood.
The clown, who *cursing Providence repines*,
His mournful fellow from the team disjoins ;
With many a groan forsakes his fruitless care,
And in the unfinish'd furrow leaves the share.

"I would appeal to the reader," says Dr. Beattie, "whether, by debasing the charming simplicity

¹ Dr. Beattie, *Dissertation on Poetry and Music*, p. 357. 4to. ed.

of *It tristis arator* with his blasphemous paraphrase, Dryden has not destroyed the beauty of the passage." He has undoubtedly, even although the translation had been otherwise faultless. But it is very far from being so. *Duro fumans sub vomere*, is not translated at all, and another idea is put in its place. *Extremosque ciet gemitus*, a most striking part of the description, is likewise entirely omitted. "Spews a flood" is vulgar and nauseous; and "a flood of foamy madness" is nonsense. In short, the whole passage in the translation is a mass of error and impropriety.

The simple expression, *Jam Procyon furit*, in Horace, 3, 29, is thus translated by the same author :

The Syrian star
Barks from afar,
And with his sultry breath infects the sky.

This *barking* of a *star* is a bad specimen of the music of the spheres. Dryden, from the fervour of his imagination, and the rapidity with which he composed, is frequently guilty of similar impropriety in his metaphorical language. Thus, in his version of Du Fresnoy, *de Arte Graphica*, he translates

Indolis ut vigor inde potens obstrictus hebescat,

"Neither would I extinguish the *fire* of a *vein* which is lively and abundant."

The following passage in the second *Georgic*,

as translated by Delille, is an example of vitious taste.

Ac dum prima novis adolescit frondibus ætas,
 Parcendum teneris : et dum se lætus ad auras
 Palmes agit, laxis per purum immissus habenis,
 Ipsa acies nondum falce tentanda ;—

Quand ses premiers bourgeons s'empresseront d'éclore,
 Que l'acier rigoureux n'y touche point encore ;
 Même lorsque dans l'air, qu'il commence à braver,
 Le rejetton moins frêle ose enfin s'élever ;
 Pardonne à son audace en faveur de son âge :—

The expression of the original is bold and figurative, *lætus ad auras*,—*laxis per purum immissus habenis*; but there is nothing that offends the chastest taste. The concluding line of the translation is disgustingly finical,

Pardonne à son audace en faveur de son âge.

Mr. Pope's translation of the following passage of the *Iliad*, is censurable on a similar account :

Λαοὶ μὲν φθινυθουσι περὶ πόλιν, αἶψα τε τέϊχος,
 Μαρναμενοι·

Iliad, 6, 327.

For thee great Ilion's guardian heroes fall,
 Till heaps of dead alone defend the wall.

Of this conceit, of dead men defending the walls of Troy, Mr. Pope has the sole merit. The original, with grave simplicity, declares, that the people fell, fighting before the town, and around the walls.—

¹ Fitzosborne's *Letters*, 43.

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In the translation of the two following lines from Ovid's *Epistle of Sappho to Phaon*, the same author has added a witticism, which is less reprehensible, because it accords with the usual manner of the poet whom he translates: yet it cannot be termed an improvement of the original:

“Scribimus, et lachrymis oculi rorantur abortis,
Aspice, quam sit in hoc multa litura loco.”

See while I write, my words are lost in tears,
The less my sense, the more my love appears.

POPE.

But if authors, even of taste and genius, are found at times to have made an injudicious use of that liberty which is allowed in the translation of poetry, we must expect to see it miserably abused indeed, where those talents are evidently wanting. The following specimen of a Latin version of the *Paradise Lost* is an example of everything that is vitious and offensive in poetical translation.

Primævi cano furta patris, furtumque secutæ
Tristia fata necis, labes ubi prima notavit
Quotquot Adamæo genitos de sanguine vidit
Phæbus ad Hesperias ab Eoo cardine metas;
Quos procul auricomis Paradisi depulit hortis,
Dira cupido atavûm, raptique injuria pomi:
Terrigena donec meliorque et major Adamus,
Amissis meliora bonis, majora reduxit.
Quosque dedit morti lignum inviolabile, mortis
Unicus ille alio rapuit de limine ligno.

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Terrenusque licet pereat *Paradisus*, at ejus
Munere *laxa patet Paradisi porta* superni :
Hæc œstro stimulata novo mens pandere gestit.
Quis mihi monstret iter? Quis carbasa nostra
profundo
Dirigat in dubio?

Gul. Hogæi Paradisus Amissus, l. i.

How completely is Milton disguised in this translation! His Majesty exchanged for meanness, and his simplicity for bombast!"¹

The preceding observations, though they principally regard the first general rule of translation, viz. that which enjoins a complete transference of the ideas and sentiments of the original work, have likewise a near connection with the second general rule, which I shall now proceed to consider.

¹ It is amusing to observe the conceit of this author, and the compliment he imagines he pays to the taste of his patron, in applauding this miserable composition: "Adeo tibi placuit, ut quædam etiam in melius mutasse tibi visus fuerim." With similar arrogance and absurdity, he gives Milton credit for the materials only of the poem, assuming to himself the whole merit of its structure: "Miltonus Paradisum Amissum invenerat; ergo Miltoni hic lana est, at mea tela tamen."

CHAPTER V

SECOND GENERAL RULE: THE STYLE AND MANNER OF WRITING IN A TRANSLATION SHOULD BE OF THE SAME CHARACTER WITH THAT OF THE ORIGINAL.—TRANSLATIONS OF THE SCRIPTURES;—OF HOMER, ETC.—A JUST TASTE REQUISITE FOR THE DISCERNMENT OF THE CHARACTERS OF STYLE AND MANNER.—EXAMPLES OF FAILURE IN THIS PARTICULAR;—THE GRAVE EXCHANGED FOR THE FORMAL;—THE ELEVATED FOR THE BOMBAST;—THE LIVELY FOR THE PETULANT;—THE SIMPLE FOR THE CHILDISH.—HOBBS, L'ESTRANGE, ECHARD, ETC.

NEXT in importance to a faithful transfusion of the sense and meaning of an author, is an assimilation of the style and manner of writing in the translation to that of the original. This requisite of a good translation, though but secondary in importance, is more difficult to be attained than the former; for the qualities requisite for justly discerning and happily imitating the various characters of style and manner, are much more rare than the ability of simply understanding an author's sense. A good translator must be able to discover at once the true character of his author's style.

He must ascertain with precision to what class it belongs; whether to that of the grave, the elevated, the easy, the lively, the florid and ornamented, or the simple and unaffected; and these characteristic qualities he must have the capacity of rendering equally conspicuous in the translation as in the original. If a translator fails in this discernment, and wants this capacity, let him be ever so thoroughly master of the sense of his author, he will present him through a distorting medium, or exhibit him often in a garb that is unsuitable to his character.

The chief characteristic of the historical style of the sacred scriptures, is its simplicity. This character belongs indeed to the language itself. Dr. Campbell has justly remarked, that the Hebrew is a simple tongue: "That their verbs have not, like the Greek and Latin, a variety of moods and tenses, nor do they, like the modern languages, abound in auxiliaries and conjunctions. The consequence is, that in narrative, they express by several simple sentences, much in the way of the relations used in conversation, what in most other languages would be comprehended in one complex sentence of three or four members."¹ The same author gives, as an example of this simplicity, the beginning of the first chapter of Genesis, where the account of the operations of the Creator on

¹ *Third Preliminary Diss. to New Translation of the Four Gospels.*

the first day is contained in eleven separate sentences. "1. In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth. 2. And the earth was without form, and void. 3. And darkness was upon the face of the deep. 4. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 5. And God said, let there be light. 6. And there was light. 7. And God saw the light, that it was good. 8. And God divided the light from the darkness. 9. And God called the light day. 10. And the darkness he called night. 11. And the evening and the morning were the first day." "This," says Dr. Campbell, "is a just representation of the style of the original. A more perfect example of simplicity of structure, we can nowhere find. The sentences are simple, the substantives are not attended by adjectives, nor the verbs by adverbs; no synonymas, no superlatives, no effort at expressing things in a bold, emphatical, or uncommon manner."

Castalio's version of the Scriptures is intitled to the praise of elegant Latinity, and he is in general faithful to the sense of his original; but he has totally departed from its style and manner, by substituting the complex and florid composition to the simple and unadorned. His sentences are formed in long and intricate periods, in which many separate members are artfully combined; and we observe a constant endeavour at a classical phraseology and orna-

mented diction.¹ In Castalio's version of the foregoing passage of Genesis, nine sentences of the original are thrown into one period. 1. *Principio creavit Deus cælum et terram.* 2. *Quum autem esset terra iners atque rudis, tenebrisque effusum profundum, et divinus spiritus sese super aquas libraret, jussit Deus ut existeret lux, et extitit lux; quam quum videret Deus esse bonam, lucem secrevit a tenebris, et lucem diem, et tenebras noctem appellavit.* 3. *Ita extitit ex vespere et mane dies primus.*

Dr. Beattie, in his essay *On Laughter and Ludicrous Composition*, has justly remarked, that the translation of the Old Testament by Castalio does great honour to that author's learning, but not to his taste. "The quaintness of his Latin betrays a deplorable inattention to the simple majesty of his original. In the Song of Solomon, he has debased the magnificence of the language and subject by *diminutives*, which, though expressive of familiar endearment, he should have known to be desti-

¹ "His affectation of the manner of some of the poets and orators has metamorphosed the authors he interpreted, and stript them of the venerable signatures of antiquity, which so admirably befit them; and which, serving as intrinsic evidence of their authenticity, recommend their writings to the serious and judicious. Whereas, when accoutred in this new fashion, nobody would imagine them to have been Hebrews; and yet, (as some critics have justly remarked), it has not been within the compass of Castalio's art, to make them look like Romans." Dr. Campbell's 10th *Prelim. Diss.*

tute of dignity, and therefore improper on solemn occasions." *Mea Columbula, ostende mihi tuum vulticulum ; fac ut audiam tuam voculam ; nam et voculam venustulam, et vulticulum habes lepidulum.*—*Veni in meos hortulos, sororcula mea sponsa.*—*Ego dormio, vigilante meo corculo, &c.*

The version of the Scriptures by Arias Montanus, is in some respects a contrast to that of Castalio. Arias, by adopting the literal mode of translation, probably intended to give as faithful a picture as he could, both of the sense and manner of the original. Not considering the different genius of the Hebrew, the Greek, and the Latin, in the various meaning and import of words of the same primary sense ; the difference of combination and construction, and the peculiarity of idioms belonging to each tongue, he has treated the three languages as if they corresponded perfectly in all those particulars ; and the consequence is, he has produced a composition which fails in every one requisite of a good translation : it conveys neither the sense of the original, nor its manner and style ; and it abounds in barbarisms, solecisms, and grammatical inaccuracy.¹ In Latin, two negatives make an affirmative ; but it is otherwise in Greek ; they only give force to the negation : *χωρίς μου ου δυνασθε πο.ειν ουδεν*, as translated by Arias, *sine me non potestis facere nihil*, is therefore directly contrary to the sense of the original : And surely that

¹ Dr. Campbell, 10th *Prel. Diss.* part 2.

translator cannot be said either to do justice to the manner and style of his author, or to write with the ease of original composition, who, instead of perspicuous thought, expressed in pure, correct, and easy phrasology, gives us obscure and unintelligible sentiments, conveyed in barbarous terms and constructions, irreconcilable to the rules of the language in which he uses them. *Et nunc dixi vobis ante fieri, ut quum factum fuerit credatis.—Ascendit autem et Joseph a Galilæa in civitatem David, propter esse ipsum ex domo et familia David, describi cum Maria desponsata sibi uxore, existente prægnante. Factum autem in esse eos ibi, impleti sunt dies parere ipsam. —Venerunt ad portam, quæ spontanea aperta est eis, et exeuntes processerunt vicum. — Nunquid aquam prohibere potest quis ad non baptizare hos ? —Spectat descendens super se vas quoddam linteum, quatuor initis vinctum.—Aperiens autem Petrus os, dixit: in veritate deprehendo quia non est personarum acceptor Deus.*¹

¹ The language of that ludicrous work, *Epistolæ obscurorum virorum*, is an imitation, and by no means an exaggerated picture, of the style of Arias Montanus's version of the Scriptures. *Vos bene audivistis qualiter Papa habuit unum magnum animal quod vocatum fuit Elephas; et habuit ipsum in magno honore, et valde amavit illud. Nunc igitur debetis scire, quod tale animal est mortuum. Et quando fuit infirmum, tunc Papa fuit in magna tristitia, et vocavit medicos plures, et dixit eis: Si est possibile, sanate mihi Elephas. Tunc fecerunt magnam diligentiam, et viderunt ei urinam, et dederunt ei unam purgationem quæ constat quinque centum aureos, sed tamen non potuerunt Elephas facere merdare, et sic est mortuum; et Papa dolet*

The characteristic of the language of Homer is strength united with simplicity. He employs frequent images, allusions, and similes ; but he very rarely uses metaphorical expression. The use of this style, therefore, in a translation of Homer, is an offence against the character of the original. Mr. Pope, though not often, is sometimes chargeable with this fault ; as where he terms the arrows of Apollo "the feather'd fates," *Iliad*, 1, 68, a quiver of arrows, "a store of flying fates," *Odyssey*, 22, 136 : or instead of saying, that the soil is fertile in corn, "in wavy gold the summer vales are dress'd," *Odyssey*, 19. 131 ; the soldier wept, "from his eyes pour'd down the tender dew," *Ibid.* 11, 486.

Virgil, in describing the shipwreck of the Trojans, says,

Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto,

Which the Abbé des Fontaines thus translates : "A peine un petit nombre de ceux qui montoient le vaisseau purent se sauver à la nage." Of this translation Voltaire justly remarks, "C'est traduire Virgile en style de gazette. Où est ce vaste gouffre que peint le poète, *gurgite vasto* ? Où est l'*apparent rari nantes* ? Ce n'est pas ainsi qu'on doit traduire l'Eneide." *Voltaire, Quest. sur l'Encyclop. mot Amplification.*

multum super Elephas ; quia fuit mirabile animal, habens longum rostrum in magna quantitate.—Ast ego non curabo ista mundana negotia, quæ afferunt perditionem animæ. Valete.

If we are thus justly offended at hearing Virgil speak in the style of the *Evening Post* or the *Daily Advertiser*, what must we think of the translator, who makes the solemn and sententious Tacitus express himself in the low cant of the streets, or in the dialect of the waiters of a tavern?

Facile Asinium et Messalam inter Antonium et Augustum bellorum præmiis refertos: Thus translated, in a version of Tacitus by Mr. Dryden and several eminent hands: "Asinius and Messala, who feathered their nests well in the civil wars 'twixt Antony and Augustus." *Vinolentiam et libidines usurpans*: "Playing the good-fellow." *Frustra Arminium præscribi*: "Trumping up Arminius's title." *Sed Agrippina libertam æmulam, nurum ancillam, aliaque eundem in modum muliebriter fremere*: "But Agrippina could not bear that a freedwoman should *nose* her." And another translator says, "But Agrippina could not bear that a freedwoman should *beard* her." Of a similar character with this translation of Tacitus is a translation of Suetonius by several gentlemen of Oxford,¹ which abounds with such elegancies as the following: *Sestio Gallo, libidinoso et prodigo seni*: "Sestius Gallus, a most notorious old Sir Jolly." *Jucundissimos et omnium horarum amicos*: "His boon companions and sure cards." *Nullam*

¹ Lond. 1691.

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unquam occasionem dedit: "They never could pick the least hole in his coat."

Juno's apostrophe to Troy, in her speech to the Gods in council, is thus translated in a version of Horace by "The Most Eminent Hands."

*Ilion, Ilion,
Fatalis incestusque iudex, &c.*

HOR. 3, 3.

O Ilion, Ilion, I with transport view
The fall of all thy wicked, perjur'd crew !
Pallas and I have *borne a rankling grudge*
To that *curst* Shepheid, that incestuous judge.

The description of the majesty of Jupiter, contained in the following passage of the first book of the *Iliad*, is allowed to be a true specimen of the sublime. It is the archetype from which Phidias acknowledged he had framed his divine sculpture of the Olympian Jupiter :

Η, και κνανησιν επ' οφρυσι νευσε Κρονιων
Αμβροσiai δ' αρα χαιται επερρωσαντο ανακτος,
Κρατος απ' αθανατοιο, μεγαν δ' ελελιξεν Ολυμπον.

He spoke, and awful bends his sable brows,
Shakes his ambrosial curls, and gives the nod,
The stamp of fate, and sanction of the God :
High heaven, with trembling, the dread signal took,
And all Olympus to its centre shook.

POPE.

Certainly Mr. Hobbes of Malmsbury perceived no portion of that sublime which was felt by

Phidias and by Mr. Pope, when he could thus translate this fine description :

This said, with his black brows he to her nodded,
 Wherewith displayed were his locks divine ;
 Olympus shook at stirring of his godhead,
 And Thetis from it jump'd into the brine.

In the translation of the *Georgics*, Mr. Dryden has displayed great powers of poetry. But Dryden had little relish for the pathetic, and no comprehension of the natural language of the heart. The beautiful simplicity of the following passage has entirely escaped his observation, and he has been utterly insensible to its tenderness :

*Ipse cavâ solans ægrum testudine amorem,
 Te, dulcis conjux, te solo in littore secum,
 Te veniente die, te decedente canebat.*

VIRG. *Geor.* 4.

Th' unhappy husband, now no more,
 Did on his tuneful harp his loss deplore,
 And sought his mournful mind with music to restore. }
 On thee, dear Wife, in deserts all alone,
 He call'd, sigh'd, sung ; his griefs with day begun,
 Nor were they finish'd till the setting sun.

The three verbs, *call'd*, *sigh'd*, *sung*, are here substituted, with peculiar infelicity, for the repetition of the pronoun ; a change which converts the pathetic into the ludicrous.

In the same episode, the poet compares the complaint of Orpheus to the wailing of a night-

ingale, robb'd of her young, in those well-known beautiful verses :

*Qualis populea mœrens Philomela sub umbra
Amisso queritur fœtus, quos durus arator
Observans nido implumes, detraxit : at illa
Flet noctem, ramoque sedens miserabile carmen
Integrat, et mœstis late loca questibus implet.*

Thus translated by De Lille :

Telle sur un ramcau durant la nuit obscure
Philomele plaintive attendrit la nature,
Accuse en gémissant l'oiseleur inhumain,
Qui, glissant dans son nid une furtive main,
Ravit ces tendres fruits que l'amour fit eclorre,
Et qu'un léger duvet ne couvroit pas encore.

It is evident, that there is a complete evaporation of the beauties of the original in this translation : and the reason is, that the French poet has substituted sentiments for facts, and refinement for the simple pathetic. The nightingale of De Lille melts all nature with her complaint ; accuses with her sighs the inhuman fowler, who glides his thievish hand into her nest, and plunders the tender fruits that were hatched by love ! How different this sentimental foppery from the chaste simplicity of Virgil !

The following beautiful passage in the sixth book of the *Iliad* has not been happily translated by Mr. Pope. It is in the parting interview between Hector and Andromache.

Ὡς εἰπων, ἀλοχαιο φίλης ἐν χερσιν ἐθήκε
 Παιδ' ἔον' ἢ δ' ἀρα μιν κηῶδει δεξατο κολπῶ,
 Δακρυοεν γέλασασα· ποσις δ' ἐλεησε νοήσας,
 Χεῖρι τε μιν κατερέξεν, ἐπος τ' ἐφάτ' ἐκ τ' ὀνομάζε.

He spoke, and fondly gazing on her charms,
 Restor'd the pleasing burden to her arms ;
 Soft on her fragrant breast the babe she laid,
 Hush'd to repose, and with a smile survey'd.
 The troubled pleasure soon chastis'd by fear,
 She mingled with the smile a tender tear.
 The soften'd chief with kind compassion view'd,
 And dried the falling drops, and thus pursu'd.

This, it must be allowed, is good poetry ; but it wants the affecting simplicity of the original. *Fondly gazing on her charms—pleasing burden—The troubled pleasure soon chastised by fear,* are injudicious embellishments. The beautiful expression *Δακρυοεν γέλασασα* is totally lost by amplification ; and the fine circumstance, which so much heightens the tenderness of the picture, *Χεῖρι τε μιν κατερέξεν*, is forgotten altogether.

But a translator may discern the general character of his author's style, and yet fail remarkably in the imitation of it. Unless he is possessed of the most correct taste, he will be in continual danger of presenting an exaggerated picture or a caricatura of his original. The distinction between good and bad writing is often of so very slender a nature, and the shadowing of difference so extremely delicate, that a very nice perception alone can at all

times define the limits. Thus; in the hands of some translators, who have discernment to perceive the general character of their author's style, but want this correctness of taste, the grave style of the original becomes heavy and formal in the translation; the elevated swells into bombast, the lively froths up into the petulant, and the simple and naïf degenerates into the childish and insipid.¹

In the fourth Oration against Catiline, Cicero, after drawing the most striking picture of the miseries of his country, on the supposition that success had crowned the designs of the conspirators, closes the detail with this grave and solemn application :

Quia mihi vehementer hæc videntur misera atque miseranda, idcirca in eos qui ea perficere voluerunt, me severum, vehementemque præbeo. Etenim quæro, si quis paterfamilias, liberis suis a servo interfectis, uxore occisa, incensa domo, supplicium de servo quam acerbissimum sumserit ; utrum is clemens ac misericors, an inhumanissimus et crudelissimus esse videatur ? Mihi vero importunus ac ferreus, qui non dolore ac cruciatu nocentis, suum dolorem ac cruciatum lenierit.

How awkwardly is the dignified gravity of the

¹ *Sectantem levia nervi*

*Deficiunt animique : professus grandia turget :
Serpit humi tutus nimium timidusque procellæ.
In vitium ducit culpæ fuga, si caret arte.*

HOR. *Ep. ad. Pis.*

original imitated, in the following heavy, formal, and insipid version.

"Now as to me these calamities appear extremely shocking and deplorable: therefore I am extremely keen and rigorous in punishing those who endeavoured to bring them about. For let me put the case, that a master of a family had his children butchered, his wife murdered, his house burnt down by a slave, yet did not inflict the most rigorous of punishments imaginable upon that slave: would such a master appear merciful and compassionate, and not rather a monster of cruelty and inhumanity? To me that man would appear to be of a flinty cruel nature, who should not endeavour to soothe his own anguish and torment by the anguish and torment of its guilty cause."¹

Ovid, in describing the fatal storm in which Ceyx perished, says,

*Undarum incursa gravis unda, tonitribus æther
Fluctibus erigitur, cælumque æquare videtur
Pontus.*

An hyperbole, allowable in poetical description; but which Dryden has exaggerated into the most outrageous bombast:

Now waves on waves ascending scale the skies,
And in the fires above the water fries.

In the first scene of the *Amphitryo* of Plautus,

¹ The *Orations* of M. T. Cicero translated into English, with notes historical and critical. Dublin, 1766.

Sosia thus remarks on the unusual length of the night :

*Neque ego hac nocte longiorem me vidisse censeo,
Nisi item unam, verberatus quam pependi perpetem.
Eam quoque, Ædepol, etiam multo hæc vicit longitudine.
Credo equidem dormire solem atque appotum probe.
Mira sunt, nisi invitavit sese in cæna plusculum.*

To which Mercury answers :

*Ain vero, verbero ? Deos esse tui similes putas ?
Ego Pol te istis tuis pro dictis et malefactis, furcifer,
Accipiam, modò sis veni huc : invenies infortunium.*

Echard, who saw no distinction between the familiar and the vulgar, has translated this in the true dialect of the streets :

"I think there never was such a long night since the beginning of the world, except that night I had the strappado, and rid the wooden horse till morning ; and, o' my conscience, that was twice as long.¹ By the mackins, I believe Phœbus has been playing the good-fellow, and 's asleep too. I'll be hang'd if he ben't in for't, and has took a little too much o' the creature."

"*Mer.* Say ye so, slave ? What, treat Gods like yourselves. By Jove, have at your doublet, Rogue, for *scandalum magnatum*. Approach then, you'll ha' but small joy here."

¹ Echard has here mistaken the author's sense. He ought to have said, "o' my conscience, this night is twice as long as that was."

"Mer. *Accedam, atque hanc appellabo atque supparasitabo patri.*" Ibid. sc. 3.

"Mer. I'll to her, and tickle her up as my father has done."

"Sosia. *Irritabis crabrones.*" Ibid. act 2, sc. 2.

"Sosia. You'd as good p—ss in a bee-hive."

Seneca, though not a chaste writer, is remarkable for a courtly dignity of expression, which, though often united with ease, never descends to the mean or vulgar. L'Estiange has presented him through a medium of such coarseness, that he is hardly to be known.

Probatos itaque semper lege, et siquando ad alios divertere libuerit, ad priores redi.—Nihil æque sanitatem impedit quam remediorum crebra mutatio, Ep. 2.—"Of authors be sure to make choice of the best; and, as I said before, stick close to them; and though you take up others by the bye, reserve some select ones, however, for your study and retreat. Nothing is more hurtful, in the case of diseases and wounds, than the frequent shifting of physic and plasters."

Fuit qui diceret, Quid perdis operam? ille quem quæris elatus, combustus est. De benef., lib. 7. c. 21.—"Friend, says a fellow, you may hammer your heart out, for the man you look for is dead."

Cum multa in crudelitatem Pisistrati conviva ebrius dixisset. De ira, lib. 3, c. 11. "Thrasippus, in his drink, fell foul upon the cruelties of Pisistratus."

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From the same defect of taste, the simple and natural manner degenerates into the childish and insipid.

J'ai perdu tout mon bonheur,

J'ai perdu mon serviteur,

Colin me délaisse.

Helas ! il a pu changer !

Je voudrois n'y plus songer :

J'y songe sans cesse.

ROUSSEAU, *Dévin de Village*.

I've lost my love, I've lost my swain ;

Colin leaves me with disdain.

Naughty Colin ! hateful thought !

To Colinette her Colin's naught.

I will forget him—that I will !

Ah, t'wont do—I love him still.

CHAPTER VI

EXAMPLES OF A GOOD TASTE IN POETICAL TRANSLATION.—BOURNE'S TRANSLATIONS FROM MALLET AND FROM PRIOR.—THE DUKE DE NIVERNOIS FROM HORACE.—DR. JORTIN FROM SIMONIDES.—IMITATION OF THE SAME BY DR. MARKHAM.—MR. WEBB FROM THE ANTHOLOGIA—HUGHES FROM CLAUDIAN.—FRAGMENTS OF THE GREEK DRAMATISTS BY MR. CUMBERLAND.

AFTER these examples of faulty translation, from a defect of taste in the translator, or a want of a just discernment of his author's style and manner of writing, I shall now present the reader with some specimens of perfect translation, where the authors have entered with exquisite taste into the manner of their originals, and have succeeded most happily in the imitation of it.

The first is the opening of the beautiful ballad of *William and Margaret*, translated by Vincent Bourne.

I

When all was wrapt in dark midnight,
And all were fast asleep,
In glided Margaret's grimly ghost,
And stood at William's feet.

II

Her face was like the April morn,
Clad in a wintry-cloud ;
And clay-cold was her lily hand,
That held her sable shroud.

III

So shall the fairest face appear,
When youth and years are flown ;
Such is the robe that Kings must wear,
When death has reft their crown.

IV

Her bloom was like the springing flower,
That sips the silver dew ;
The rose was budded in her cheek,
And opening to the view.

V

But Love had, like the canker-worm,
Consum'd her early prime ;
The rose grew pale and left her cheek,
She died before her time.

I

*Omnia nox tenebris, tacitâque involverat umbrâ.
Et fessos homines vinxerat alta quies ;
Cum valvæ patuere, et gressu illapsa silenti,
Thyrsidis ad lectum stabat imago Chloes.*

II

*Vultus erat, qualis lachrymosi vultus Aprilis,
Cui dubia hyberno conditur imbre dies ;
Quaque sepulchralem à pedibus collegit amictum,
Candidior nivibus, frigidiorque manus.*

III

*Cùmque dies aberunt molles, et læta juvenus,
 Gloria pallebit, sic Cyparissi tua ;
 Cùm mors decutiet capiti diademata, regum
 Hæc erit in trabeâ conspiciendus honos.*

IV

*Forma fuit (dum forma fuit) nascentis ad instar
 Floris, cui cano gemmula rore tumet ;
 Et Veneres risere, et subrubuere labella,
 Subrubet ut teneris purpura prima rosis.*

V

*Sed lenta exedit tabes mollemque ruborem,
 Et faciles risus, et juvenile decus ;
 Et rosa paulatim languens, nudata reliquit
 Oscula ; præripuit mors properata Chloen.*

The second is a small poem by Prior, intituled *Chloe Hunting*, which is likewise translated into Latin by Bourne.

Behind her neck her comely tresses tied,
 Her ivory quiver graceful by her side,
 A-hunting Chloe went ; she lost her way,
 And through the woods uncertain chanc'd to stray.
 Apollo passing by beheld the maid ;
 And, sister dear, bright Cynthia, turn, he said ;
 The hunted hind lies close in yonder brake.
 Loud Cupid laugh'd, to see the God's mistake :
 And laughing cried, learn better, great Divine,
 To know thy kindred, and to honour mine.
 Rightly advis'd, far hence thy sister seek,
 Or on Meander's banks, or Latmus' peak.
 But in this nymph, my friend, my sister know ;
 She draws my arrows, and she bends my bow.

Fair Thames she haunts, and every neighbouring grove,
Sacred to soft recess, and gentle Love.

Go with thy Cynthia, hurl the pointed spear

At the rough boar, or chace the flying deer :

I, and my Chloe, take a nobler aim ;

At human hearts we fling, nor ever miss the game.

Forte Chloe, pulchros nodo collecta capillos

Post collum, pharetrâque latus succincta decorâ,

Venatrix ad sylvam ibat ; cervumque secuta

Elapsum visu, deserta per avia tendit

Incerta. Errantem nympham conspexit Apollo,

Et, converte tuos, dixit, mea Cynthia, cursus ;

En ibi (monstravitque manu) tibi cervus anhelat

Occultus dumo, latebrisque moratur in illis.

Improbis hæc audivit Amor, lepidumque cachinnum

Attollens, poterantne etiam tua numina falli ?

Hinc, quæso, bone Phæbe, tuam dignosce sororem,

Et melius venerare meam. Tua Cynthia longè,

Mæandri ad ripas, aut summi in vertice Latmi,

Versatur ; nostra est soror hæc, nostra, inquit, amica est.

Hæc nostros promit calamos, arcumque sonantem

Incurvat, Tamumque colens, placidosque recessus

Lucorum, quos alma quies sacravit amanti.

Ite per umbrosos saltus, lustrisque vel aprum

Excute horrentem setis, cervumve fugacem,

Tuque sororque tua, et directo sternite ferro :

Nobilior labor, et divis dignissima cura,

Mæque Chloenque manet ; nos corda humana ferimus,

Vibrantes certum vulnus nec inutile telum.

The third specimen, is a translation by the Duke
de Nivernois, of Horace's dialogue with Lydia :

HORACE

Plus heureux qu'un monarque au faite des grandeurs,

J'ai vu mes jours dignes d'envie,

Tranquiles, ils couloient au gré de nos ardeurs :

Vous m'aimiez, charmante Lydie.

LYDIE

Que mes jours étoient beaux, quand des soins les
plus doux

Vous payiez ma flamme sincère !
Venus me regardoit avec des yeux jaloux ;
Chloé n'avoit pas sçu vous plaire.

HORACE

Par son luth, par sa voix, organe des amours,
Chloé seule me paroît belle :
Si le Destin jaloux veut épargner ses jours,
Je donnerai les miens pour elle.

LYDIE

Le jeune Calais, plus beau que les amours,
Plait seul à mon ame ravie :
Si le Destin jaloux veut épargner ses jours,
Je donnerai deux fois ma vie.

HORACE

Quoi, si mes premiers feux, ranimant leur ardeur,
Etouffoient une amour fatale ;
Si, perdant pour jamais tous ses droits sur mon cœur,
Chloé vous laissoit sans rivale——

LYDIE

Calais est charmant : mais je n'aime que vous,
Ingrat, mon cœur vous justifie ;
Heureuse également en des liens si doux,
De perdre ou de passer la vie.¹

If any thing is faulty in this excellent translation, it is the last stanza, which does not convey

¹ *Hor.* Donec gratus eram tibi,
Nec quisquam potior brachia candidæ
Cervici juvenis dabat ;
Persarum vigui rege beatior.

the happy petulance, the *procacitas* of the original. The reader may compare with this, the fine translation of the same ode by Bishop Atterbury, "Whilst I was fond, and you were kind," which is too well known to require insertion.

The fourth example is a translation by Dr. Jortin of that beautiful fragment of Simonides, preserved by Dionysius, in which Danae, exposed with her child to the fury of the ocean, by command of her inhuman father, is described lamenting over her sleeping infant.

Lyd. Donec non aliam magis
Arsisti, neque erat Lydia post Chloen ;
Multi Lydia nominis
Romanâ vigui clarior Iliâ.

Hor. Me nunc Thressa Chloe regit,
Dulceis docta modos, et citharæ sciens ;
Pro qua non metuum mori,
Si parcent animæ fata superstiti.

Lyd. Me torret face mutuâ
Thurini Calais filius Ornithi ;
Pro quo bis patiar mori,
Si parcent puero fata superstiti.

Hor. Quid, si prisca redit Venus,
Diductosque jugo cogit aheneo ?
Si flava excutitur Chloe,
Rejectæque patet janua Lydiæ ?

Lyd. Quamquam sidere pulchrior
Ille est, tu levior cortice, et improbo
Iracundior Hadriâ ;
Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens.

HOR. l. 3, Od. 9.

Ex Dionys. Hal. De Compositione Verborum,
c. 26.

Οτε λαρνακι εν δαιδαλεα ανεμος
βρεμη πνεων, κινηθεισα δε λιμνα
Δειματι ερειπεν· ουτ' αδιανταισι
Παρειαίς, αμφι τε Περσεϊ βαλλε
Φιλαν χερα, ειπεν τε· ω τεκνον,
'Οιον εχω πονον. συ δ' αντε γαλαθηνω
Ητορι κνοσσεις εν ατερπει δωματι,
Χαλκεογομφω δε, νυκτιλαμπει,
Κυανew τε δνοφω· συ δ' αναλεαν
Υπερθε τεαν κομαν βαθειαν
Παριοντος κυματος ουκ αλεγεις
Ουδ' ανεμου φθογγων, πορφυρεα
Κειμενος εν χλανιδι, προσωπον καλον·
Ει δε τοι δεινον το γε δεινον ην
Και μεν εμων ρηματων λεπτων
Υπειχες ούας. κελομαι, ένδε, βρεφος,
'Ευδετω δε ποντος, ευδετω αμετρον κακον.
Ματαιοβουλια δε τις φανειη
Ζευ πατερ, εκ σεο· ότι δη θαρσαλεον
Επος, ευχομαι τεκνοφι δικας μοι.

Nocte sub obscura, verrentibus æquora ventis,
Quum brevis immensa cymba nataret aqua,
Multa gemens Danae subjecit brachia nato,
Et teneræ lacrymis immaduere genæ.
Tu tamen ut dulci, dixit, pulcherrime, somno
Obrutus, et metuens tristia nulla, jaces !
Quamvis, heu quales cunas tibi concutit unda,
Præbet et incertam pallida luna facem,
Et vehemens flavos everberat aura capillos,
Et prope, subsultans, irrigat ora liquor,
Nate, meam sentis vocem ? Nil cernis et audis,
Teque premunt placidi vincula blanda dei ;
Nec mihi purpureis effundis blæsa labellis
Murmura, nec notos confugis usque sinus.

Care, quiesce, puer, sævique quiescite fluctus,
 Et mea qui pulsas corda, quiesce, dolor.
 Cresce puer ; matris leni atque ulciscere luctus,
 Tuque tuos saltem protege summe Tonans.

This admirable translation falls short of its original only in a single particular, the measure of the verse. One striking beauty of the original, is the easy and loose structure of the verse, which has little else to distinguish it from animated discourse but the harmony of the syllables ; and hence it has more of natural impassioned eloquence, than is conveyed by the regular measure of the translation. That this characteristic of the original should have been overlooked by the ingenious translator, is the more remarkable, that the poem is actually quoted by Dionysius, as an apposite example of that species of composition in which poetry approaches to the freedom of prose ; *της εμμελούς και εμμετρου συνθεσεως της εχουσης πολλην ὁμοιοτητα προς την πεζην λεξιν*. Dr. Markham saw this excellence of the original ; and in that fine imitation of the verses of Simonides, which an able critic¹ has pronounced to be far superior to the original, has given it its full effect. The passage alluded to is an apostrophe of a mother to her sleeping infant, a widowed mother, who has just left the deathbed of her husband.

His conatibus occupata, ocellos
 Guttis lucidulis adhuc madentes

¹ Dr. Warton.

Convertit, puerum sopore vinctum
 Qua nutrix placido sinu fovebat :
 Dormis, inquit, O miselle, nec te
 Vultus exanimes, silentiumque
 Per longa atria commovent, nec ullo
 Fratrum tangeris, aut meo dolore ;
 Nec sentis patre destitutus illo
 Qui gestans genibusve brachiove
 Aut formans lepidam tuam loquelam
 Tecum mille modis ineptiebat.
 Tu dormis, volitantque qui solebant
 Risus in roseis tuis labellis.—
 Dormi parvule ! nec mali dolores
 Qui matrem cruciant tuæ quietis
 Rumpant somnia.—Quando, quando tales
 Redibunt oculis meis sopores !

The next specimen I shall give, is the translation of a beautiful epigram, from the *Anthologia* which is supposed by Junius to be descriptive of a painting mentioned by Pliny,¹ in which, a mother wounded, and in the agony of death, is represented as giving suck to her infant for the last time :

Ελκε.τάλαν παρα μητρος ὃν οὐκ ἔτι μαζὸν ἀμελξείς,
 Ελκυσον ὑστατιον νᾶμα καταφθιμένης
 Ἡδὴ γὰρ ξιφέεσσι λιπόπνοος, ἀλλὰ τὰ μητρος
 Φύλτρα καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ παιδοκομεῖν ἔμαθον.

¹ *Hujus (viz. Aristidis) pictura est, oppido capto, ad matris morientis e vulnere mammam adrepens infans ; intelligiturque sentire mater et timere, ne emortuo lacte sanguinem infans lambat.* Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 35, c. 10.—If the epigram was made on the subject of this picture, Pliny's idea of the expression of the painting is somewhat more refined than that of the epigrammatist, though certainly not so natural. As a complicated feeling can never be clearly expressed in painting, it is not improbable that the same picture should have suggested ideas somewhat different to different observers.

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Thus happily translated, into English by Mr. Webb :

Suck, little wretch, while yet thy mother lives,
Suck the last drop her fainting bosom gives !
She dies : her tenderness survives her breath,
And her fond love is provident in death.

Equal in merit to any of the preceding, is the following translation by Mr. Hughes from *Claudian*.

Ex Epithalamio Honorii & Mariæ.

*Cunctatur stupefacta Venus ; nunc ora puellæ,
Nunc flavam niveo miratur vertice matrem.
Hæc modo crescenti, plenæ par altera Lunæ :
Assurgit ceu fortè minor sub matre virenti
Laurus ; et ingentes ramos, olimque futuras
Promittit jam parva comas : vel flore sub uno
Seu geminæ Pæstana rosæ per jugera regnant.
Hæc largo matura die, saturataque vernis
Roribus indulget spatium : latet altera nodo,
Nec teneris audet foliis admittere soles.*

The goddess paus'd ; and, held in deep amaze,
Now views the mother's, now the daughter's face.
Different in each, yet equal beauty glows ;
That, the full moon, and this, the crescent shows,
Thus, rais'd beneath its parent tree is seen
The laurel shoot, while in its early green
Thick sprouting leaves and branches are essay'd,
And all the promise of a future shade.
Or blooming thus, in happy Pæstan fields,
One common stock two lovely roses yields :
Mature by vernal dews, this dares display
Its leaves full-blown, and boldly meets the day
That, folded in its tender nonage lies,
A beauteous bud, nor yet admits the skies.

The following passage, from a Latin version of the *Messiah* of Pope, by a youth of uncommon genius,¹ exhibits the singular union of ease, animation, and harmony of numbers, with the strictest fidelity to the original.

*Lanigera ut cautè placidus regit agmina pastor,
Aera ut explorat purum, camposque virentes ;
Amixtas ut quærit oves, moderatur euntium
Ut gressus, curatque diu, nocturne tuetur ;
Ut teneros agnos lenta inter brachia tollit,
Mulcenti pascit palma, gremioque focillat ;
Sic genus omne hominum sic complectetur amanti
Pectore, promissus seculo Pater ille futuro.*

As the good shepherd tends his fleecy care,
Seeks freshest pasture and the purest air ;
Explores the lost, the wandering sheep directs,
By day o'ersees them, and by night protects ;
The tender lambs he raises in his arms,
Feeds from his hand, and in his bosom warms :
Thus shall mankind his guardian care engage
The promis'd Father of the future age.

To these specimens of perfect translation, in which not only the ideas of the original are completely transfused, but the manner most happily imitated, I add the following admirable translations by Mr. Cumberland,² of two fragments from the Greek dramatists Timocles and Diphilus, which are preserved by Athenæus.

¹ J. H. Beattie, son of the learned and ingenious Dr. Beattie of Aberdeen, a young man who disappointed the promise of great talents by an early death. In him, the author of *The Minstrel* saw his *Edwin* realised.

² *Observer*, vol. 4, p. 115, and vol. 5, p. 145.

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The first of these passages beautifully illustrates the moral uses of the tragic drama :

Nay, my good friend, but hear me ! I confess
 Man is the child of sorrow, and this world,
 In which we breathe, hath cares enough to plague us ;
 But it hath means withal to soothe these cares :
 And he who meditates on others' woes,
 Shall in that meditation lose his own :
 Call then the tragic poet to your aid,
 Hear him, and take instruction from the stage :
 Let Telephus appear ; behold a prince,
 A spectacle of poverty and pain,
 Wretched in both.—And what if you are poor ?
 Are you a demigod ? Are you the son
 Of Hercules ? Begone ! Complain no more.
 Doth your mind struggle with distracting thoughts ?
 Do your wits wander ? Are you mad ? Alas !
 So was Alcmeon, whilst the world ador'd
 His father as their God. Your eyes are dim ;
 What then ? The eyes of Œdipus were dark,
 Totally dark. You mourn a son ; he's dead ;
 Turn to the tale of Niobe for comfort,
 And match your loss with hers. You're lame of foot ;
 Compare it with the foot of Philoctetes,
 And make no more complaint. But you are old,
 Old and unfortunate ; consult Oeneus ;
 Hear what a king endur'd, and learn content.
 Sum up your miseries, number up your sighs,
 The tragic stage shall give you tear for tear,
 And wash out all afflictions but its own.¹

The following fragment from Diphilus conveys

¹ The original of the fragment of Timocles :

Ω ταν, ἀκουσον ἡν τι σοι μέλλω λέγειν.
 Ἀνθρωπὸς ἐστὶ ζῶον ἐπίπονον φύσει,
 Καὶ πολλὰ λυπῆρ' ὁ βίος ἐν ἑαυτῷ φέρει.
 Παραψυχὰς οὖν φροντίζων ἀνευρατον

a very favourable idea of the spirit of the dialogue, in what has been termed the New Comedy of the Greeks, or that which was posterior to the age of Alexander the Great.

Ταυτας· ὁ γὰρ νοῦς τῶν ἰδίων λήθην λαβὼν
 Πρὸς ἄλλοτριφ τε ψυχαγωγηθεὶς πάθει,
 Μεθ' ἡδονῆς ἀπῆλθε παιδευθεὶς ἅμα.
 Τοὺς γὰρ τραγωδοὺς πρῶτον εἰ βούλει σκόπει,
 Ὡς ὠφελοῦσί παντας· ὁ μὲν γὰρ ὢν πένης
 Πτωχότερον αὐτοῦ καταμαθὼν τὸν Τήλεφον
 Γενόμενον, ἤδη τὴν πενίαν ῥᾶον φέρει.
 Ὁ νοσῶν δὲ μανικῶς, Ἀλκμαίων' εσκεψάτο.
 Οφθαλμιά τις ; εἰσὶ Φινεῖδαι τυφλοί.
 Τέθνηκε τῷ παῖς ; ἡ Νιόβη κεκούφικε.
 Χωλός τις ἐστί, τὸν Φιλοκτήτην ὄρᾳ.
 Γέρων τις ἀτυχεῖ ; κατέμαθε τὸν Οἰνέα.
 Ἀπαντα γὰρ τὰ μείζον' ἢ πέπονθέ τις
 Ἀτυχήματ' ἄλλοις γεγονότ' ἐννοούμενος,
 Τὰς αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ συμφορὰς ῥᾶον φέρει.

Thus, in the literal version of Dalechampius :

*Hem amice, nunc ausculata quod dicturus sum tibi.
 Animal naturâ laboriosum homo est.
 Tristia vita secum affert plurima :
 Itaque curarum hæc adinvenit solatia :
 Mentem enim suorum malorum oblitam,
 Alienorum casuum reputatio consolatur,
 Indêque fit ea læta, et erudita ad sapientiam.
 Tragicos enim primùm, si libet, considera,
 Quàm prosint omnibus. Qui eget,
 Pauperiorem se fuisse Telephum
 Cùm intelligit, leniùs fert inopiam.
 Insaniâ qui ægrotat, de Alcmeone is cogitet.
 Lippus est aliquis, Phinea cæcum is contempletur.
 Obiit tibi filius, dolorem levabit exemplum Niobes.
 Claudicat quispiam, Philocteten is respicito.
 Miser est senex aliquis, in Oeneum is intuetor.
 Omnia namque graviora quàm patiatur
 Infortunia quivis animadvertens in aliis cùm deprehen-
 derit,
 Suas calamitates luget minùs.*

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Of this period Diphilus and Menander were among the most shining ornaments.

We have a notable good law at Corinth,
Where, if an idle fellow outruns reason,
Feasting and junketting at furious cost,
The sumptuary proctor calls upon him,
And thus begins to sift him.—You live well,
But have you well to live? You squander freely,
Have you the wherewithal? Have you the fund
For these outgoings? If you have, go on!
If you have not, we'll stop you in good time,
Before you outrun honesty; for he
Who lives we know not how, must live by plunder;
Either he picks a purse, or robs a house,
Or is accomplice with some knavish gang,
Or thrusts himself in crowds, to play th' informer,
And put his perjurd evidence to sale;
This a well-order'd city will not suffer;
Such vermin we expel.—“And you do wisely:
But what is that to me?”—Why, this it is:
Here we behold you every day at work,
Living, forsooth! not as your neighbours live,
But richly, royally, ye gods!—Why man,
We cannot get a fish for love or money,
You swallow the whole produce of the sea:
You've driv'n our citizens to brouze on cabbage;
A sprig of parsley sets them all a-fighting,
As at the Isthmian games: If hare or partridge,
Or but a simple thrush comes to the market,
Quick, at a word, you snap him: By the Gods!
Hunt Athens through, you shall not find a feather
But in your kitchen; and for wine, 'tis gold—
Not to be purchas'd.—We may drink the ditches.¹

¹ The original of the fragment of Diphilus:

Τοιοῦτο νόμιμόν ἐστι βέλτιστ' ἐνθαδὲ
Κορινθίοις, ἵν' ἔαν τιν' ὀψωνοῦντ' ἄει

Of equal merit with these two last specimens, are the greatest part of those translations given by Mr. Cumberland of the fragments of the

Λαμπρῶς δρωμεν, τοῦτον ἀνακρίνειν πόθεν
 Ζῆ, καὶ τί ποιῶν. κἄν μιν οὐσίαν εἴχῃ
 Ἡς αἱ προσοδοὶ λυοῦσι τ' ἀναλώματα,
 Εἴαν ἀπολαύειν. ἤδε τοῦτον τὸν βίον.
 Εἰαν δ' ὑπὲρ τὴν οὐσίαν δαπανῶν τύχῃ,
 Απεῖπον αὐτῷ τοῦτο μὴ ποιεῖν ἔτι.
 Ὅς ἂν δὲ μὴ πείθῃτ', ἐπέβαλον ζῆμιαν.
 Εἰάν δὲ μηδε ὅτιοῦν ἔχων ζῆ πολυτελῶς,
 Τῷ δημῷ παρέδωκεν αὐτον. Ἡράκλεις.
 Οὔκ ἐνδέχεται γὰρ ζῆν ἄνευ κακοῦ τινὸς
 Τοῦτον. συνίης ; ἀλλ' ἀναγκαίως ἔχει
 Ἡλοπαυτεῖν τὰς νύκτας, ἢ τοιχωρυχεῖν,
 Ἡ τῶν ποιουντων ταῦτα κοινωνεῖν τισιν.
 Ἡ συκοφαντεῖν κατ' ἀγορᾶν, ἢ μαρτυρεῖν
 Ψευδῇ, τοιοῦτων ἐκκαθαίρομεν γένος.
 Ορθῶς γε νῆ Δί', ἀλλὰ δὴ τί τοῦτ' ἐμοί ;
 Ορώμεν ὀψωνοῦνθ' ἐκάστης ἡμέρας,
 Οὔχι μετρίως βέλτιστέ σ', ἀλλ' ὑπερῆφάνως.
 Οὔκ ἔστιν ἰχθυερὸν ὑπὸ σοῦ μεταλαβεῖν.
 Συνηκας ἡμῶν εἰς τὰ λάχανα τὴν πόλιν,
 Περὶ τῶν σελινῶν μαχόμεθ' ὥσπερ ἰσθμίοις.
 Λαγῶς τις εἰσελήλυθ'. ἐνθὺς ἤρπακας.
 Πέρδικα δ' ἢ κιχλὴν ; καὶ νῆ Δί' οὐκ ἔτι
 Ἔστιν δι' ὑμᾶς οὐδὲ πετομενὴν ἰδεῖν,
 Τὸν ξενικὸν οἶνον ἐπιτετίμηκας πολὺ.

Thus in the version of Dalechampius :

A. *Talis istic lex est, o vir optime,
 Corinthiis : si quem obsonantem semper
 Splendidius aspexerint, illum ut interrogent
 Unde vivat, quidnam agat : quod si facultates illi sunt
 Quarum ad eum sumptum reditus sufficiat,
 Eo vitæ luxu permittunt frui :
 Sin amplius impendat qudm pro re sua,
 Ne id porro faciat interdicitur.
 Si non parat, multa quidem plectitur.
 Si sumptuose vivit qui nihil prorsus habet,
 Traditur puniendus carnifici.* B. *Proh Hercules.*

A. *Quod enim scias, fieri minime potest
 Ut qui eo est ingenio, non vivat improbe : itaque necessum*

Greek dramatists. The literary world owes to that ingenious writer a very high obligation for his excellent view of the progress of the dramatic art among the Greeks, and for the collection he has made of the remains of more than fifty of their comic poets.¹

*Vel noctu grassantem obvios spoliare, vel effractarium,
parietem suffodere,
Vel his se furibus adjungere socium,
Aut delatorem et quadruplatorem esse in foro : aut falsum
Testari : à talium hominum genere purgatur civitas.*

B. *Rectè, per Jovem : sed ad me quid hoc attinet ?*

A. *Nos te videmus obsonantem quotidie
Haud mediocriter, vir optime, sed fastuosè, et magnificè,
Ne pisciculum quidem habere licet caussâ tud :
Cives nostros commisisti, pugnaturos de oleribus :
De apio dimicamus tanquam in Isthmiis.
Si lepus accessit, eum extemplo rapis.
Perdicem, ac turdum ne volantem quidem
Propter vos, ita me Juppiter amet, nobis jam videre licet,
Peregrini multùm auxistis vini pretium.*

¹ It is to be regretted that Mr. Cumberland had not either published the original fragments along with his translations, or given special references to the authors from whom he took them, and the particular part of their works where they were to be found. The reader who wishes to compare the translations with the originals, will have some trouble in searching for them at random in the works of Athenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Stobæus, and others.

CHAPTER VII

LIMITATION OF THE RULE REGARDING THE IMITATION OF STYLE. — THIS IMITATION MUST BE REGULATED BY THE GENIUS OF LANGUAGES.—THE LATIN ADMITS OF A GREATER BREVITY OF EXPRESSION THAN THE ENGLISH;—AS DOES THE FRENCH.—THE LATIN AND GREEK ALLOW GREATER INVERSIONS THAN THE ENGLISH, —AND ADMIT MORE FREELY OF ELLIPSIS

THE rule which enjoins to a translator the imitation of the style of the original author, demands several limitations.

1. This imitation must always be regulated by the nature or genius of the languages of the original and of the translation.

The Latin language admits of a brevity, which cannot be successfully imitated in the English.

Cicero thus writes to Trebatius (lib. 7, ep. 17):

In Britanniam te profectum non esse gaudeo, quod et tu labore caruisti, et ego te de rebus illis non audiam.

It is impossible to translate this into English with equal brevity, and at the same time do complete justice to the sentiment. Melmoth, therefore, has shewn great judgement in sacrificing the imitation of style to the perfect transfusion of the sense. "I am glad, for my sake as well

as yours, that you did not attend Cæsar into Britain; as it has not only saved you the fatigue of a very disagreeable journey, but me likewise that of being the perpetual auditor of your wonderful exploits." *Melm. Cic. Lett. b. 2, l. 12.*

Pliny to Minutianus, lib. 3, ep. 9, says, towards the end of his letter: *Temerè dixi—Succurrit quod præterieram, et quidem serò: sed quanquam preposterè reddetur. Facit hoc Homerus, multique illius exemplo. Est alioqui perdecorum: a me tamen non ideo fiet.* It is no doubt possible to translate this passage into English with a conciseness almost equal to the original; but in this experiment we must sacrifice all its ease and spirit. "I have said this rashly—I recollect an omission—somewhat too late indeed. It shall now be supplied, though a little preposterously. Homer does this: and many after his example. Besides, it is not unbecoming; but this is not my reason." Let us mark how Mr. Melmoth, by a happy amplification, has preserved the spirit and ease, though sacrificing the brevity of the original. "But upon recollection, I find that I must recall that last word; for I perceive, a little too late indeed, that I have omitted a material circumstance. However, I will mention it here, though something out of its place. In this, I have the authority of Homer, and several other great names, to keep me in countenance; and the critics will tell you this irregular manner has its

beauties : but, upon my word, it is a beauty I had not at all in my view."

An example of a similar brevity of expression, which admits of no imitation in English, occurs in another letter of Cicero to Trebatius, *Ep.* l. 7, 14.

Chrysippus Vettius, Cyri architecti libertus, fecit, ut te non inmemorem putarem mei. Valde jam lautus es qui gravere literas ad me dare, homini præsertim domestico. Quod si scribere oblitus es, minus multi jam te advocato causâ cadent. Sin nostri oblitus es, dabo operam ut isthuc veniam antequam planè ex animo tuo effluo.

In translating this passage, Mr. Melmoth has shewn equal judgement. Without attempting to imitate the brevity of the original, which he knew to be impossible, he saw that the characterising features of the passage were ease and vivacity; and these he has very happily transfused into his translation.

"If it were not for the compliments you sent me by Chrysippus, the freedman of Cyrus the architect, I should have imagined I no longer possessed a place in your thoughts. But surely you are become a most intolerable fine gentleman, that you could not bear the fatigue of writing to me, when you had the opportunity of doing so by a man, whom, you know, I look upon as one almost of my own family. Perhaps, however, you may have forgotten the use of your pen : and so much the better, let me tell

you, for your clients, as they will lose no more causes by its blunders. But if it is myself only that has escaped your remembrance, I must endeavour to refresh it by a visit, before I am worn out of your memory, beyond all power of recollection."

Numberless instances of a similar exercise of judgement and of good taste are to be found in Mr. Murphy's excellent translation of Tacitus. After the death of Germanicus, poisoned, as was suspected, by Piso, with the tacit approbation of Tiberius, the public loudly demanded justice against the supposed murderer, and the cause was solemnly tried in the Roman Senate. Piso, foreseeing a judgement against him, chose to anticipate his fate by a voluntary death. The senate decreed that his family name should be abolished for ever, and that his brother Marcus should be banished from his country for ten years; but in deference to the solicitations of the Empress, they granted a free pardon to Plancina, his widow. Tacitus proceeds to relate, that this sentence of the senate was altered by Tiberius: *Multa ex ea sententia mitigata sunt a principe; "ne nomen Pisonis fastis eximeretur, quando M. Antonii, qui bellum patriæ fecisset, Juli Antonii, qui domum Augusti violasset, manerent," et M. Pisonem ignominie exemit, concessitque ei paterna bona; satis firmus, ut sæpe memoravi, adversus pecuniam; et tum pudore absolutæ Plancinæ placabilior. Atque idem cum Valerius*

Messalinus signum aureum in æde Martis Ultoris, Cæcina Severus aram ultioni statuendam censuissent, prohibuit: ob externas ea victorias sacrari dictitans, domestica mala tristitia operienda.
An. l. 3, c. 18.

Thus necessarily amplified, and translated with the ease of original composition, by Mr. Murphy :

“This sentence, in many particulars, was mitigated by Tiberius. The family name, he said, ought not to be abolished, while that of Mark Antony, who appeared in arms against his country, as well as that of Julius Antonius, who by his intrigues dishonoured the house of Augustus, subsisted still, and figured in the Roman annals. Marcus Piso was left in possession of his civil dignities, and his father's fortune. Avarice, as has been already observed, was not the passion of Tiberius. On this occasion, the disgrace incurred by the partiality shewn to Plancina, softened his temper, and made him the more willing to extend his mercy to the son. Valerius Messalinus moved, that a golden statue might be erected in the temple of Mars, the Avenger. An altar to Vengeance was proposed by Cæcina Severus. Both these motions were over-ruled by the Emperor. The principle on which he argued was, that public monuments, however proper in cases of foreign conquest, were not suited to the present juncture. Domestic calamity should be lamented, and as soon as possible consigned to oblivion.”

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The conclusion of the same chapter affords an example yet more striking of the same necessary and happy amplification by the translator.

Addidcrat Messalinus, Tiberio et Augustæ, et Antoniæ, et Agrippinæ, Drusoque, ob vindictam Germanici grates agendas, omiseratque Claudii mentionem; et Messalinum quidem L. Asprenas senatu coram percunctatus est, an prudens præterisset? Actum demum nomen Claudii adscriptum est. Mihi quanto plura recentium, seu veterum revolve, tanto magis ludibria rerum mortalium cunctis in negotiis obversantur; quippe fama, spe, veneratione potius omnes destinabantur imperio, quam quem futurum principem fortuna in occulto tenebat.

“Messalinus added to his motion a vote of thanks to Tiberius and Livia, to Antonia, Agrippina, and Drusus, for their zeal in bringing to justice the enemies of Germanicus. The name of Claudius was not mentioned. Lucius Asprenas desired to know whether that omission was intended. The consequence was, that Claudius was inserted in the vote. Upon an occasion like this, it is impossible not to pause for a moment, to make a reflection that naturally rises out of the subject. When we review what has been doing in the world, is it not evident, that in all transactions, whether of ancient or of modern date, some strange caprice of fortune turns all human wisdom to a jest? In the

juncture before us, Claudius figured so little on the stage of public business, that there was scarce a man in Rome, who did not seem, by the voice of fame and the wishes of the people, designed for the sovereign power, rather than the very person, whom fate, in that instant, cherished in obscurity, to make him, at a future period, master of the Roman world."

So likewise in the following passage, we must admire the judgement of the translator in abandoning all attempt to rival the brevity of the original, since he knew it could not be attained but with the sacrifice both of case and perspicuity:

Is finis fuit ulciscenda Germanici morte, non modo apud illos homines qui tum agebant, etiam secutis temporibus vario rumore jactata; adeo maxima quæque ambigua sunt, dum alii quoquo modo audita pro compertis habent; alii vera in contrarium vertunt; et gliscit utrumque posteritate. An. l. 3, c. 19.

"In this manner ended the enquiry concerning the death of Germanicus; a subject which has been variously represented, not only by men of that day, but by all subsequent writers. It remains, to this hour, the problem of history. A cloud for ever hangs over the most important transactions; while, on the one hand, credulity adopts for fact the report of the day; and, on the other, politicians warp and disguise the truth: between both parties two different

accounts go down from age to age, and gain strength with posterity."

The French language admits of a brevity of expression more corresponding to that of the Latin : and of this D'Alembert has given many happy examples in his translations from Tacitus.

Quod si vita suppeditet, principatum divi Nervæ et imperium Trajani, uberiores, securioresque materiam senectuti seposui : rarâ temporum felicitate, ubi sentire quæ velis, et quæ sentias dicere licet, Præf. ad Hist. " Si les dieux m'accordent des jours, je destine à l'occupation et à la consolation de ma vieillesse, l'histoire intéressante et tranquille de Nerva et de Trajan ; tems heureux et rares, où l'on est libre de penser et de parler."

And with equal, perhaps superior felicity, the same passage is thus translated by Rousseau : " Que s'il me reste assez de vie, je reserve pour ma vieillesse la riche et paisible matiere des regnes de Nerva et de Trajan : rares et heureux tems, où l'on peut penser librement, et dire ce que l'on pense."

But D'Alembert, from too earnest a desire to imitate the conciseness of his original, has sometimes left the sense imperfect. Of this an example occurs in the passage before quoted, *An. l. 1, c. 2. Cum cæteri nobilium, quanto quis servitio promptior, opibus et honoribus extollerentur* : the translator, too studious of brevity, has not given the complete idea of his author,

“Le reste des nobles trouvoit dans les richesses et dans les honneurs la récompense de l’esclavage.” *Omnium consensu capax imperii nisi imperasset*, Tac. Hist. i, 49. “Digne de l’empire au jugement de tout le monde tant qu’il ne regna pas.” This is not the idea of the author; for Tacitus does not mean to say that Galba was judged worthy of the empire till he attained to it; but that all the world would have thought him worthy of the empire if he had never attained to it.

2. The Latin and Greek languages admit of inversions which are inconsistent with the genius of the English.

Mr. Gordon, injudiciously aiming at an imitation of the Latin construction, has given a barbarous air to his translation of Tacitus: “To Pallas, who was by Claudius declared to be the deviser of this scheme, the ornaments of the prætorship, and three hundred seventy-five thousand crowns, were adjudged by Bareas Soranus, consul designed,” *An. b. 12.*—“Still to be seen are the Roman standards in the German groves, there, by me, hung up,” *An. lib. 1.* “Naturally violent was the spirit of Arminius, and now, by the captivity of his wife, and by the fate of his child, doomed to bondage though yet unborn, enraged even to distraction.” *Ib.* “But he, the more ardent he found the affections of the soldiers, and the greater the hatred of his uncle, so much the more intent

upon a decisive victory, weighed with himself all the methods," &c. *Ib.* lib. 2.

Thus, Mr. Macpherson, in his translation of Homer, (a work otherwise valuable, as containing a most perfect transfusion of the sense of his author), has generally adopted an inverted construction, which is incompatible with the genius of the English language. "Tlepolemus, the race of Hercules,—brave in battle and great in arms, nine ships led to Troy, with magnanimous Rhodians filled. Those who dwelt in Rhodes, distinguished in nations three,—who held Lindus, Ialysus, and white Camirus, beheld him afar.—Their leader in arms was Tlepolemus, renowned at the spear, *Il.* l. 2.—The heroes the slaughter began.—Alexander first a warrior slew—Through the neck, by the helm passed the steel.—Iphinous, the son of Dexius, through the shoulder he pierced—to the earth fell the chief in his blood, *Ib.* l. 7. Not unjustly we Hector admire; matchless at launching the spear; to break the line of battle, bold, *Ib.* l. 5. Nor for vows unpaid rages Apollo; nor solemn sacrifice denied," *Ib.* l. 1.

3. The English language is not incapable of an elliptical mode of expression; but it does not admit of it to the same degree as the Latin. Tacitus says, *Trepida civitas incusare Tiberium*, for *trepida civitas inceptit incusare Tiberium*. We cannot say in English, "The terrified city to blame Tiberius:" And even as Gordon has

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translated these words, the ellipsis is too violent for the English language ; “hence against Tiberius many complaints.”

Εννημαρ μιν ανα στρατόν ωκετο κῆλα θεοῦ.

Il. l. 1, l. 53.

“For nine days the arrows of the god were darted through the army.” The elliptical brevity of Mr. Macpherson’s translation of this verse, has no parallel in the original; nor is it agreeable to the English idiom :

“Nine days rush the shafts of the God.”

CHAPTER VIII

WHETHER A POEM CAN BE WELL TRANSLATED INTO PROSE

FROM all the preceding observations respecting the imitation of style, we may derive this precept, That a Translator ought always to figure to himself, in what manner the original author would have expressed himself, if he had written in the language of the translation.

This precept leads to the examination, and probably to the decision, of a question which has admitted of some dispute, Whether a poem can be well translated into prose?

There are certain species of poetry, of which the chief merit consists in the sweetness and melody of the versification. Of these it is evident, that the very essence must perish in translating them into prose. What should we find in the following beautiful lines, when divested of the melody of verse?

She said, and melting as in tears she lay,
In a soft silver stream dissolved away.
The silver stream her virgin coldness keeps,
For ever murmurs, and for ever weeps ;
Still bears the name the hapless virgin bore,
And bathes the forest where she rang'd before.
Pope's Windsor Forest.

But a great deal of the beauty of every regular

poem, consists in the melody of its numbers. Sensible of this truth, many of the prose translators of poetry, have attempted to give a sort of measure to their prose, which removes it from the nature of ordinary language. If this measure is uniform, and its return regular, the composition is no longer prose, but blank-verse. If it is not uniform, and does not regularly return upon the ear, the composition will be more unharmonious, than if the measure had been entirely neglected. Of this, Mr. Macpherson's translation of the *Iliad* is a strong example.

But it is not only by the measure that poetry is distinguishable from prose. It is by the character of its thoughts and sentiments, and by the nature of that language in which they are clothed.¹ A boldness of figures, a luxuriancy of imagery, a frequent use of metaphors, a quickness of transition, a liberty of digressing; all these are not only allowable in poetry, but to many species of it, *essential*. But they are quite unsuitable to the character of prose. When seen in a *prose translation*, they appear preposterous and out of place, because they are never found in an *original prose composition*.

In opposition to these remarks, it may be urged, that there are examples of poems originally composed in prose, as Fenelon's *Telemachus*.

¹ C'est en quoi consiste le grand art de la Poësie, de dire figurément presque tout ce qu'elle dit. *Rapin. Reflex. sur la Poétique en général.* § 29.

But to this we answer, that Fenelon, in composing his *Telemachus*, has judiciously adopted nothing more of the characteristics of poetry than what might safely be given to a prose composition. His good taste prescribed to him certain limits, which he was under no necessity of transgressing. But a translator is not left to a similar freedom of judgement: he must follow the footsteps of his original. Fenelon's *Epic Poem* is of a very different character from the *Iliad*, the *Aeneid*, or the *Gierusalemme Liberata*. The French author has, in the conduct of his fable, seldom transgressed the bounds of historic probability; he has sparingly indulged himself in the use of the Epic machinery; and there is a chastity and sobriety even in his language, very different from the glowing enthusiasm that characterises the diction of the poems we have mentioned: We find nothing in the *Telemague* of the *Os magna sonaturum*.

The difficulty of translating poetry into prose, is different in its degree, according to the nature or species of the poem. Didactic poetry, of which the principal merit consists in the detail of a regular system, or in rational precepts which flow from each other in a connected train of thought, will evidently suffer least by being transfused into prose. But every didactic poet judiciously enriches his work with such ornaments as are not strictly attached to his subject. In a prose translation of such a poem, all that

is strictly systematic or preceptive may be transfused with 'propriety'; all the rest, which belongs to embellishment, will be found impertinent and out of place. Of this we have a convincing proof in Dryden's translation of the valuable poem of Du Fresnoy, *De Arte Graphica*. The didactic parts of the poem are translated with becoming propriety; but in the midst of those practical instructions in the art of painting, how preposterous appear in prose such passages as the following?

"Those things which the poets have thought unworthy of their pens, the painters have judged to be unworthy of their pencils. For both those arts, that they might advance the sacred honours of religion, have raised themselves to heaven; and having found a free admission into the palace of Jove himself, have enjoyed the sight and conversation of the Gods, whose awful majesty they observe, and whose dictates they communicate to mankind, whom, at the same time they inspire with those celestial flames which shine so gloriously in their works."

"Besides all this, you are to express the motions of the spirits, and the affections or passions, whose centre is the heart. This is that in which the greatest difficulty consists. Few there are whom Jupiter regards with a favourable eye in this undertaking.

"And as this part, (the Art of Colouring), which we may call the utmost perfection of

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Painting, is a deceiving beauty, but withal soothing and pleasing ; so she has been accused of procuring lovers for her sister (Design), and artfully engaging us to admire her."

But there are certain species of poetry, of the merits of which it will be found impossible to convey the smallest idea in a prose translation. Such is Lyric poetry, where a greater degree of irregularity of thought, and a more unrestrained exuberance of fancy, is allowable than in any other species of composition. To attempt, therefore, a translation of a lyric poem into prose, is the most absurd of all undertakings ; for those very characters of the original which are essential to it, and which constitute its highest beauties, if transferred to a prose translation, become unpardonable blemishes. The excursive range of the sentiments, and the play of fancy, which we admire in the original, degenerate in the translation into mere raving and impertinence. Of this the translation of Horace in prose, by Smart, furnishes proofs in every page.

We may certainly, from the foregoing observations, conclude, that it is impossible to do complete justice to any species of poetical composition in a prose translation ; in other words, that none but a poet can translate a poet.

CHAPTER IX

THIRD GENERAL RULE — A TRANSLATION SHOULD HAVE ALL THE EASE OF ORIGINAL COMPOSITION.—EXTREME DIFFICULTY IN THE OBSERVANCE OF THIS RULE.—CONTRASTED INSTANCES OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE.—OF THE NECESSITY OF SOMETIMES SACRIFICING ONE RULE TO ANOTHER

IT remains now that we consider the third general law of translation.

In order that the merit of the original work may be so completely transfused as to produce its full effect, it is necessary, not only that the translation should contain a perfect transcript of the sentiments of the original, and present likewise a resemblance of its style and manner ; but, That the translation should have all the ease of original composition.

When we consider those restraints within which a translator finds himself necessarily confined, with regard to the sentiments and manner of his original, it will soon appear that this last requisite includes the most difficult part of his task.¹ To one who walks in trammels, it is not

¹ “ Quand il s'agit de représenter dans une autre langue les choses, les pensées, les expressions, les tours, les tons d'un ouvrage ; les choses telles qu'elles sont sans rien

easy to exhibit an air of grace and freedom. It is difficult, even for a capital painter, to preserve in a copy of a picture all the ease and spirit of the original; yet the painter employs precisely the same colours, and has no other care than faithfully to imitate the touch and manner of the picture that is before him. If the original is easy and graceful, the copy will have the same qualities, in proportion as the imitation is just and perfect. The translator's task is very different: He uses not the same colours with the original, but is required to give his picture the same force and effect. He is not allowed to copy the touches of the original, yet is required,

ajouter, ni retrancher, ni déplacer; les pensées dans leurs couleurs, leurs degrés, leurs nuances; les tours, qui donnent le feu, l'esprit, et la vie au discours; les expressions naturelles, figurées, fortes, riches, gracieuses, délicates, &c. le tout d'après un modèle qui commande durement, et qui veut qu'on lui obéisse d'un air aisé; il faut, sinon autant de génie, du moins autant de gout pour bien traduire, que pour composer. Peut-être même en faut il davantage. L'auteur qui compose, conduit seulement par une sorte d'instinct toujours libre, et par sa matière qui lui présente des idées, qu'il peut accepter ou rejeter à son gré, est maître absolu de ses pensées et de ses expressions: si la pensée ne lui convient pas, ou si l'expression ne convient pas à la pensée, il peut rejeter l'une et l'autre; *quæ desperat tractata nitescere posse, relinquit*. Le traducteur n'est maître de rien; il est obligé de suivre partout son auteur, et de se plier à toutes ses variations avec une souplesse infinie. Qu'on en juge par la variété des tons qui se trouvent nécessairement dans un même sujet, et à plus forte raison dans un même genre.—Quelle idée donc ne doit-on pas avoir d'une traduction faite avec succès?"—*Batteux de la construction Oratoire*, par. 2.

by touches of his own, to produce a perfect resemblance. The more he studies a scrupulous imitation, the less his copy will reflect the ease and spirit of the original. How then shall a translator accomplish this difficult union of ease with fidelity? To use a bold expression, he must adopt the very soul of his author, which must speak through his own organs.

Let us proceed to exemplify this third rule of translation, which regards the attainment of ease of style, by instances both of success and failure.

The familiar style of epistolary correspondence is rarely attainable even in original composition. It consists in a delicate medium between the perfect freedom of ordinary conversation and the regularity of written dissertation or narrative. It is extremely difficult to attain this delicate medium in a translation; because the writer has neither a freedom of choice in the sentiments, nor in the mode of expressing them. Mr. Melmoth appears to me to be a great model in this respect. His Translations of the *Epistles of Cicero* and of Pliny have all the ease of the originals, while they present in general a very faithful transcript of his author's sense.

"Surely, *my friend*, your couriers are a *set of the most unconscionable fellows*. *Not that they have given me any particular offence; but as they never bring me a letter when they arrive here, is it fair, they should always press me for one when they return?*" Melmoth, *Cic. Ep.* 10, 20.

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. *Præposteros habes tabellarios ; etsi me quidem non offendunt. Sed tamen cum a me discedunt, flagitant litteras, cum ad me veniunt, nullas afferunt.* Cic. Ep. l. 15, ep. 17.

"Is it not more worthy of your *mighty* ambition, to be blended with your learned brethren at Rome, than to stand *the sole great wonder of wisdom* amidst a *parcel of paltry provincials*?" Melmoth, Cic. Ep. 2, 23.

Velim—ibi malis esse ubi aliquo numero sis, quam isthic ubi solus sapere videare. Cic. Ep. l. 1, ep. 10.

"In short, I plainly perceive your *finances* are in no flourishing situation, and I expect to hear the same account of all your neighbours ; so that *famine, my friend, most formidable famine*, must be your *fate*, if you do not provide against it in due time. And since you have been reduced to sell your horse, *e'en mount your mule*, (the only animal, *it seems*, belonging to you, which you have not yet *sacrificed to your table*), and convey yourself immediately to Rome. To encourage you to do so, you shall be honoured with a chair and cushion next to mine, and sit the second *great pedagogue* in my *celebrated school*." Melmoth, Cic. Ep. 8, 22.

Video te bona perdidisse : spero idem isthuc familiares tuos. Actum igitur de te est, nisi provides. Potes mulo isto quem tibi reliquum dicis esse (quando cantherium comedisti) Romam pervehi. Sella tibi erit in ludo, tanquam hypodi-

dascalo ; proxima eam pulvinus sequetur. Cic. Ep. 1. 9, ep. 18.

"Are you not a *pleasant mortal*, to question me concerning the fate of those estates you mention, when Balbus had just before been *paying you a visit ?*" Melmoth, *Cic. Ep.* 8, 24.

Non tu homo ridiculus es, qui cum Balbus noster apud te fuerit, ex me quæras quid de istis municipiis et agris futurum putem ? Cic. Ep. 9, 17.

"And now I have raised your expectations of this piece, *I doubt* you will be disappointed when it comes to your hands. In the meanwhile, however, you may expect it, as something that will please you : *And who knows but it may ?*" Plin. Ep. 8, 3.

Erexi expectationem tuam ; quam vereor ne destituat oratio in manus sumpta. Interim tamen, tanquam placituram, et fortasse placebit, expecta. Plin. Ep. 8, 3.

"I consent to undertake the cause which you so earnestly recommend to me ; but as *glorious and honourable as it may be, I will not be your counsel without a fee.* Is it possible, you will say, that *my friend Pliny* should be so mercenary ? *In truth it is ; and I insist upon* a reward, which will do me more honour than the most disinterested patronage." Plin. Ep. 6, 23.

Impense petis ut agam causam pertinentem ad curam tuam, pulchram alioquin et famosam. Faciam, sed non gratis. Qui fieri potest (inquis)

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ut non gratis tu ? Potest : exigam enim mercedem honestiorem gratuito patrocinio. Plin. Ep. 8, 3.

To these examples of the ease of epistolary correspondence, I add a passage from one of the orations of Cicero, which is yet in a strain of greater familiarity : “A certain mechanic—*What’s his name ?—Oh, I’m obliged to you for helping me to it : Yes, I mean Polycletus.*” Melmoth.

Artificem—quemnam ? Recte admones. Polycletum esse ducebant. Cicero, Orat. 2, in Verrem.

In the preceding instances from Mr. Melmoth, the words of the English translation which are marked in Italics, are those which, in my opinion, give it the ease of original composition.

But while a translator thus endeavours to transfuse into his work all the ease of the original, the most correct taste is requisite to prevent that ease from degenerating into licentiousness. I have, in treating of the imitation of style and manner, given some examples of the want of this taste. The most licentious of all translators was Mr. Thomas Brown, of facetious memory, in whose translations from Lucian we have the most perfect ease ; but it is the ease of Billingsgate and of Wapping. I shall contrast a few passages of his translation of this author, with those of another translator, who has given a faithful transcript of the sense of his original, but from an over-scrupulous fidelity has failed a little in point of ease.

GNATHON. "What now! Timon, do you strike me? Bear witness, Hercules! O me, O me! But I will call you into the Areopagus for this. TIMON, Stay a little only, and you may bring me in guilty of murder."¹ Francklin's *Lucian*.

GNATHON. "Confound him! what a blow he has given me! What's this for, old Touchwood? Bear witness, Hercules, that he has struck me. I warrant you, I shall make you repent of this blow. I'll indite you upon an action of the case, and bring you *coram nobis* for an assault and battery." TIMON. "Do, thou confounded law-pimp, do; but if thou stay'st one minute longer, I'll beat thee to pap. I'll make thy bones rattle in thee, like three blue beans in a blue bladder. Go, stinkard, or else I shall make you alter your action, and get me indicted for manslaughter." *Timon*, Trans. by Brown in Dryden's *Lucian*.

"On the whole, a most perfect character; we shall see presently, with all his modesty, what a bawling he will make." Francklin's *Lucian*, *Timon*.²

"In fine, he's a person that knows the world better than any one, and is extremely well

¹ ΓΝ. Τι τοῦτο; παίεις ὦ Τιμών; μαρτυρομαι ὦ Ἡρακλεῖς· ἰού, ἰού. Προκαλοῦμαι σε τραυματός εἰς Ἀρείον παγόν· Τιμ. Καί μεν ἂν γέ μακρόν ἐπιβραδύνῃς, φόνον ταχά προκεκλήσῃ με. *Lucian*, *Timon*.

² Καὶ ὅλως πανσοφόν τι χρῆμα, καὶ πανταχοθεν ἀκριβές, καὶ ποικίλως ἐντελές· οἰμῶζεται τοιγαρὺν οὐκ εἰς μακρὰν χρῆστος ὢν. *Lucian*, *Timon*.

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acquainted with the whole Encyclopædia of villany; a true elaborate finished rascal, and for all he appears so demure now, that you'd think butter would not melt in his mouth, yet I shall soon make him open his pipes, and roar like a persecuted bear." Dryden's *Lucian, Timon*.

"He changes his name, and instead of Byrria, Dromo, or Tibius, now takes the name of Megacles, or Megabyzus, or Protarchus, leaving the rest of the expectants gaping and looking at one another in silent sorrow." Francklin's *Lucian, Timon*.¹

"Straight he changes his name, so that the rascal, who the moment before had no other title about the house, but, you son of a whore, you bulk-begotten cur, you scoundrel, must now be called his worship, his excellency, and the Lord knows what. The best on't is, that this mushroom puts all these fellows noses out of joint," &c. Dryden's *Lucian, Timon*.

From these contrasted specimens we may decide, that the one translation of Lucian errs perhaps as much on the score of restraint, as the other on that of licentiousness. The preceding examples from Melmoth point out, in my opinion, the just medium of free and spirited translation, for the attainment of which the most correct taste is requisite.

¹ Αντι του τews Πυρριου, η Δρομωνος, η Τιβιου, Μεγακλης, Μεγαβυζος, η Πρωταρχος μετονομασθεις, τους ματην κεχηνοτας εκεινους εις αλληλους αποβλεποντας καταλιπων, &c. *Lucian, Timon*.

If the order in which I have classed the three general laws of translation is their just and natural arrangement, which I think will hardly be denied, it will follow, that in all cases where a sacrifice is necessary to be made of one of those laws to another, a due regard ought to be paid to their rank and comparative importance. The different genius of the languages of the original and translation, will often make it necessary to depart from the manner of the original, in order to convey a faithful picture of the sense ; but it would be highly preposterous to depart, in any case, from the sense, for the sake of imitating the manner. Equally improper would it be, to sacrifice either the sense or manner of the original, if these can be preserved consistently with purity of expression, to a fancied ease or superior gracefulness of composition. This last is the fault of the French translations of D'Ablancourt, an author otherwise of very high merit. His versions are admirable, so long as we forbear to compare them with the originals ; they are models of ease, of elegance, and perspicuity ; but he has considered these qualities as the primary requisites of translation, and both the sense and manner of his originals are sacrificed, without scruple, to their attainment.¹

¹ The following apology made by D'Ablancourt of his own version of Tacitus, contains, however, many just observations ; from which, with a proper abatement

of that extreme liberty for which he contends, every translator may derive much advantage.

Of Tacitus he thus remarks : "Comme il considere souvent les choses par quelque biais étranger, il laisse quelquefois ses narrations imparfaites, ce qui engendre de l'obscurité dans ses ouvrages, outre la multitude des fautes qui s'y rencontrent, et le peu de lumiere qui nous reste de la plupart des choses qui y sont traitées. Il ne faut donc pas s'étonner s'il est si difficile à traduire, puisqu'il est même difficile à entendre. D'ailleurs il a accoutumé de mêler dans une même periode, et quelquefois dans une même expression diverses pensées qui ne tiennent point l'une à l'autre, et dont il faut perdre une partie, comme dans les ouvrages qu'on polit, pour pouvoir exprimer le reste sans choquer les délicatesses de notre langue, et la justesse du raisonnement. Car on n'a pas le même respect pour mon François que pour son Latin ; et l'on ne me pardonneroit pas des choses, qu'on admire souvent chez lui, et s'il faut ainsi dire, qu'on revere. Par tout ailleurs je l'ai suivi pas à pas, et plutôt en esclave qu'en compagnon ; quoique peutetre je me pusse donner plus de liberté, puisque je ne traduis pas un passage, mais un livre, de qui toutes les parties doivent etre unies ensemble, et comme fondues en un même corps. D'ailleurs, la diversité qui se trouve dans les langues est si grande, tant pour la construction et la forme des periodes, que pour les figures et les autres ornemens, qu'il faut à tous coups changer d'air et de visage, si l'on ne veut faire un corps monstrueux, tel que celui des traductions ordinaires, qui sont ou mortes et languissantes, ou confuses et embrouillées, sans aucun ordre ni agrément. Il faut donc prendre garde qu'on ne fasse perdre la grace à son auteur par trop de scrupule, et que de peur de lui manquer de foi en quelque chose, on ne lui soit infidele en tout : principalement, quand on fait un ouvrage qui doit tenir lieu de l'original, et qu'on ne travaille pas pour faire entendre aux jeunes gens le Grec ou le Latin. Car on fait que les expressions hardies ne sont point exactes, parceque la justesse est ennemie de la grandeur, comme il se voit dans la peinture et dans l'écriture ; mais la hardiesse du trait en supplée le défaut, et elles sont trouvées plus belles de la sorte, que si elles étoient plus régulières. D'ailleurs il est difficile d'être

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bien exact dans la traduction d'un auteur qui ne l'est point. Souvent on est contraint d'ajouter quelque chose à sa pensée pour l'eclaircir; quelquefois il faut en retrancher une partie pour donner jour à tout le reste. Cependant, cela fait que les meilleures traductions paroissent les moins fideles; et un critique de notre tems a remarqué deux mille fautes dans le Plutarque d'Amyot, et un autre presque autant dans les traductions d'Erasme; peutetre pour ne pas savoir que la diversité des langues et des styles oblige à des traits tout differens, *parceque l'Eloquence est une chose si delicate, qu'il ne faut quelquefois qu'une syllabe pour la corrompre.* Car du reste, il n'y a point d'apparence que deux si grands hommes se soient abusés en tant de lieux, quoiqu'il ne soit pas étrange qu'on se puisse abuser en quelque endroit. Mais tout le monde n'est pas capable de juger d'une traduction, quoique tout le monde s'en attribue la connoissance; et ici comme ailleurs, la maxime d'Aristote devoit servir de regle, qu'il faut croire chacun en son art."

CHAPTER X

IT IS LESS DIFFICULT TO ATTAIN THE EASE OF ORIGINAL COMPOSITION IN POETICAL, THAN IN PROSE TRANSLATION.—LYRIC POETRY ADMITS OF THE GREATEST LIBERTY OF TRANSLATION. — EXAMPLES DISTINGUISHING PARAPHRASE FROM TRANSLATION,—FROM DRYDEN, LOWTH, FONTENELLE, PRIOR, ANGUILLARA, HUGHES.

IT may perhaps appear paradoxical to assert, that it is less difficult to give to a poetical translation all the ease of original composition, than to give the same degree of ease to a prose translation. Yet the truth of this assertion will be readily admitted, if assent is given to that observation, which I before endeavoured to illustrate, viz. That a superior degree of liberty is allowed to a poetical translator in amplifying, retrenching from, and embellishing his original, than to a prose translator. For without some portion of this liberty, there can be no ease of composition; and where the greatest liberty is allowable, there that ease will be most apparent, as it is less difficult to attain to it.)

For the same reason, among the different species of poetical composition, the lyric is that which allows of the greatest liberty in translation; as a freedom both of thought and expression is agreeable to its character. Yet even in

this, which is the freest of all species of translation, we must guard against licentiousness ; and perhaps the more so, that we are apt to persuade ourselves that the less caution is necessary. The difficulty indeed is, where so much freedom is allowed, to define what is to be accounted licentiousness in poetical translation. A moderate liberty of amplifying and retrenching the ideas of the original, has been granted to the translator of prose ; but is it allowable, even to the translator of a lyric poem, to add new images and new thoughts to those of the original, or to enforce the sentiments by illustrations which are not in the original ? As the limits between free translation and paraphrase are more easily perceived than they can be well defined, instead of giving a general answer to this question, I think it safer to give my opinion upon particular examples.

Dr. Lowth has adapted to the present times, and addressed to his own countrymen, a very noble imitation of the 6th ode of the third book of Horace : *Delicta majorum immeritus lues*, &c. The greatest part of this composition is of the nature of parody ; but in the version of the following stanza there is perhaps but a slight excess of that liberty which may be allowed to the translator of a lyric poet :

*Motus doceri gaudet Ionicos
Matura virgo, et fingitur artubus
Jam nunc, et incestos amores
De tenero meditatur ungui.*

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The ripening maid is vers'd in every dangerous art,
That ill adorns the form, while it corrupts the heart ;
 Practis'd to dress, to dance, to play,
 In wanton mask to lead the way,
To move the pliant limbs, to roll the luring eye ;
With Folly's gayest partizans to vie
 In empty noise and vain expence ;
 To celebrate with flaunting air
 The midnight revels of the fair ;
Studious of every praise, but virtue, truth, and sense.

Here the translator has superadded no new images or illustrations ; but he has, in two parts of the stanza, given a moral application which is not in the original : " That ill adorns the form, while it corrupts the heart ;" and " Studious of every praise, but virtue, truth, and sense." These moral lines are unquestionably a very high improvement of the original ; but they seem to me to transgress, though indeed very slightly, the liberty allowed to a poetical translator.

In that fine translation by Dryden, of the 29th ode of the third book of Horace, which upon the whole is paraphrastical, the version of the two following stanzas has no more licence than what is justifiable :

*Fortuna sævo læto negotio, et
Ludum insolentem ludere pertinax,
 Transmutat incertos honores,
 Nunc mihi, nunc alii benigna.*

*Laudo manentem : si celeres quatit
Pennas, resigno quæ dedit : et mea
 Virtute me involvo, probamque
 Pauperiem sine dote quæro.*

Fortune, who with malicious joy
 Does man, her slave, oppress,
 Proud of her office to destroy,
 Is seldom pleas'd to bless.
 Still various and inconstant still,
 But with an inclination to be ill,
 Promotes, degrades, delights in strife,
 And makes a lottery of life.
 I can enjoy her while she's kind ;
 But when she dances in the wind,
 And shakes her wings, and will not stay,
 I puff the prostitute away :
 The little or the much she gave is quietly
 resign'd ;
 Content with poverty, my soul I arm,
 And Virtue, though in rags, will keep me warm.

The celebrated verses of Adrian, addressed to
 his Soul, have been translated and imitated by
 many different writers.

Animula, vagula, blandula,
 Hospes, comesque corporis !
 Quæ nunc abibis in loca,
 Pallidula, frigida, nudula,
 Nec ut soles dabis joca ?

By Casaubon.

*Ερασμιον ψυχαριον,
 Ξενη και εταιρη σωματος,
 Ποι νυν ταλαιν ελευσεαι,
 Αμηνης, γοερατε και σκια,
 Ουδ' οια παρος τρυψησεαι ;*

Except in the fourth line, where there is a slight
 change of epithets, this may be termed a just
 translation, exhibiting both the sense and manner
 of the original.

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By Fontenelle.

Ma petite ame, ma mignonne,
Tu t'en vas donc, ma fille, et Dieu sache ou tu vas.
Tu pars seulette, nue, et tremblotante, hélas !
Que deviendra ton humeur folichonne ?
Que deviendront tant de jolis ébats ?

The French translation is still more faithful to the original, and exhibits equally with the former its spirit and manner.

The following verses by Prior are certainly a great improvement upon the original ; by a most judicious and happy amplification of the sentiments, (which lose much of their effect in the Latin, from their extreme compression) ; nor do they, in my opinion, exceed the liberty of poetical translation.

Poor little pretty flutt'ring thing,
Must we no longer live together ?
And do'st thou prune thy trembling wing,
To take thy flight, thou know'st not whither ?

The hum'rous vein, the pleasing folly,
Lies all neglected, all forgot ;
And pensive, wav'ring, melancholy,
Thou dread'st and hop'st thou know'st not what.

Mr. Pope's *Dying Christian to his Soul*, which is modelled on the verses of Adrian, retains so little of the thoughts of the original, and substitutes in their place a train of sentiments so different, that it cannot even be called a *paraphrase*, but falls rather under the description of *imitation*.

The Italian version of *Ovid* in *ottava rima*, by Anguillara, is a work of great poetical merit ; but is scarcely in any part to be regarded as a translation of the original. It is almost entirely paraphrastical. In the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, the simple ideas announced in these two lines,

Tempore crevit amor: tædæ quoque jure coissent ;
Sed vetuere patres quod non potuere vetare,

are the subject of the following paraphrase, which is as beautiful in its composition, as it is unbounded in the licence of its amplification.

Era l'amor cresciuto à poco à poco
Secondo erano in lor cresciuti gli anni :
E dove prima era trastullo, e gioco,
Scherzi, corrucci, e fanciulleschi inganni,
Quando fur giunti a quella età di foco
Dove comincian gli amorosi affanni
Che l'alma nostra ha sì leggiadro il manto
E che la Donna e'l huom s'amano tanto ;

Era tanto l' amor, tanto il desire,
Tanta la fiamma, onde ciascun ardea :
Che l' uno e l' altro si vedea morire,
Se pietoso Himeneo non gli giungea.
E tanto era maggior d'ambi il martire,
Quanto il voler de l'un l'altro scorge.
Ben ambo de le nozze eran contenti,
Ma no'l soffrìro i loro empì parenti.

Eran fra i padri lor pochi anni avanti
Nata una troppo cruda inimicitia :
E quanto amore, e fè s'hebbber gli amanti,
Tanto regnò ne' padri odiò e malitia.

Gli huomini della terra piu prestanti,
Tentar pur di ridurli in amicitia ;
E vi s'affaticar piu volte assai ;
Ma non vi sepper via ritrovar mai.

Quei padri, che fra lor fur si infedeli
Vetaro à la fanciulla, e al giovinetto,
A due si belli amanti, e si fedeli *
Che non dier luogo al desiato affetto :
Ahi padri irragionevoli e crudeli,¹
Perche togliete lor tanto diletto ;
S'ogn'un di loro il suo desio corregge
Con la terrena, e la celeste legge ?

O sfortunati padri, ove tendete,
Qual ve gli fa destin tener disgiunti ?
Perche vetate, quel che non potete ?
Che gli animi saran sempre congiunti ?

¹ A striking resemblance to this beautiful apostrophe "Ahi padri irragionevoli," is found in the beginning of Moncrif's *Romanse d'Alexis et Alis*, a ballad which the French justly consider as a model of tenderness and elegant simplicity.

Pourquoi rompre leur mariage,
Mechans parens ?
Ils auroient fait si bon menage
A tous momens !
Que sert d'avoir bagues et dentelle
Pour se parer ?
Ah ! la richesse la plus belle
Est de s'aimer.

Quand on a commencé la vie
Disant ainsi :
Oui, vous serez toujours ma mie,
Vous mon ami :
Quand l'age augmente encor l'envie
De s'entreunir,
Qu'avec un autre on nous marie
Vaut mieux mourir.

Ahi, che sara di voi, se gli vedrete
 Per lo vostro rigor restar defunti?
 Ahi, che co' vostri non sani consigli
 Procurate la morte a' vostri figli!

In the following poem by Mr. Hughes, which the author has intitled an imitation of the 16th ode of the second book of Horace, the greatest part of the composition is a just and excellent translation, while the rest is a free paraphrase or commentary on the original. I shall mark in *Italics* all that I consider as paraphrastical: the rest is a just translation, in which the writer has assumed no more liberty, than was necessary to give the poem the easy air of an original composition.

I

Indulgent Quiet! *Pow'r serene,*
Mother of Peace, and Joy, and Love,
O say, thou calm, propitious Queen,
Say, in what solitary grove,
Within what hollow rock, or winding cell,
By human eyes unseen,
Like some retreated Druid dost thou dwell?
And why, illusive Goddess! why,
When we thy mansion would surround,
Why dost thou lead us through enchanted ground,
To mock our vain research, and from our wishes fly

II

The wand'ring sailors, pale with fear,
 For thee the gods implore,
 When the tempestuous sea runs high
 And when through all the dark, benighted sky
 No friendly moon or stars appear,
 To guide their steerage to the shore :

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For thee the weary soldier prays,
Furious in fight the sons of Thrace,
And Medes, that wear majestic by their side
A full-charg'd quiver's decent pride,
Gladly with thee would pass inglorious days,
Renounce the warrior's tempting praise,
And buy thee, if thou might'st be sold,
With gems, and purple vests, and stores of plunder'd
gold.

III

But neither boundless wealth, nor guards that wait
Around the Consul's honour'd gate,
Nor antichambers with attendants fill'd,
The mind's unhappy tumults can abate,
Or banish sullen cares, that fly
Across the gilded rooms of state,
*And their foul nests like swallows build
Close to the palace-roofs and tow'rs that pierce the sky?*
Much less will Nature's modest wants supply :
And happier lives the homely swain,
Who in some cottage, far from noise,
His few paternal goods enjoys ;
Nor knows the sordid lust of gain,
Nor with Fear's tormenting pain
His hovering sleeps destroys.

IV

Vain man ! that in a narrow space
At endless game projects the darting spear !
For short is life's uncertain race ;
Then why, capricious mortal ! why
Dost thou for happiness repair
To distant climates and a foreign air ?
Fool ! from thyself thou canst not fly,
Thyself the source of all thy care :
*So flies the wounded stag, provok'd with pain,
Bounds o'er the spacious downs in vain ;*

*The feather'd torment sticks within his side,
And from the smarting wound a purple tide
Marks all his way with blood, and dies the grassy plain.*

V

But swifter far is execrable Care
Than stags, or winds, that through the skies
Thick-driving snows and gather'd tempests bear ;
Pursuing Care the sailing ship out-flies.
Climbs the tall vessel's painted sides ;
Nor leaves arm'd squadrons in the field,
But with the marching horseman rides,
And dwells alike in courts and camps, and makes all
places yield.

VI

Then, since no state's completely blest,
Let's learn the bitter to allay
With gentle mirth, and, wisely gay,
Enjoy at least the present day,
And leave to Fate the rest.
Nor with vain fear of ills to come
Anticipate th' appointed doom.
Soon did Achilles quit the stage ;
The hero fell by sudden death ;
While Tithon to a tedious, wasting age
Drew his protracted breath.
And thus, old partial Time, my friend,
Perhaps unask'd, to worthless me
Those hours of lengthen'd life may lend,
Which he'll refuse to thee.

VII

Thee shining wealth, and plenteous joys surround,
And all thy fruitful fields around
Unnumber'd herds of cattle stray ;
Thy harness'd steeds with sprightly voice,

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Make neighbouring vales and hills rejoice,
While smoothly thy gay chariot flies o'er the swift-
measur'd way.

To me the stars with less profusion kind,
An humble fortune have assign'd,
And no untuneful Lyric vein,
But a sincere contented mind
That can the vile, malignant crowd disdain.¹

¹ Otium divos rogat in patenti
Prensus Ægeo, simul atra nubes
Condidit Lunam, neque certa fulgent
Sidera nautis.

Otium bello furiosa Thrace,
Otium Medi pharetrâ decori,
Grosphe, non gemmis, neque purpurâ ve-
nale, nec auro.

Non enim gazæ, neque Consularis
Summovet lictor miseros tumultus
Mentis, et curas laqueata circum
Tecta volantes.

Vivitur parvo bene, cui paternum
Splendet in mensâ tenui salinum :
Nec leves somnos Timor aut Cupido
Sordidus aufert.

Quid brevi fortes jaculamur ævo
Multa ? quid terras alio calentes
Sole mutamus ? Patriæ quis exul,
Se quoque fugit ?

Scandit æratas vitiosa naves
Cura, nec turmas equitum relinquit,
Ocyor cervis, et agente nimbos
Ocyor Euro.

Lætus in præsens animus, quod ultra est
Oderit curare ; et amara lento
Temperat risu. Nihil est ab omni
Parte beatum.

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Abstulit clarum cita mors Achillem :
Longa Tithonum minuit senectus :
Et mihi forsân, tibi quod negârit,
Porriget hora.

Te greges centum, Siculæque circum
Mugiunt vaccæ : tibi tollit hinnitum
Apta quadrigis equa : te bis Afro
Murice tinctæ.

Vestiunt lanæ : mihi parva rura, et
Spiritus Graiæ tenuem Camœnæ
Parca non mendax dedit, et malignum
Spernere vulgus.

HOR. *Od.* 2, 16.

CHAPTER XI

OF THE TRANSLATION OF IDIOMATIC PHRASES.
—EXAMPLES FROM COTTON, ECHARD,
STERNE.—INJUDICIOUS USE OF IDIOMS IN
THE TRANSLATION, WHICH DO NOT CORRES-
POND WITH THE AGE OR COUNTRY OF THE
ORIGINAL.—IDIOMATIC PHRASES SOMETIMES
INCAPABLE OF TRANSLATION.

WHILE a translator endeavours to give to his work all the ease of original composition, the chief difficulty he has to encounter will be found in the translation of idioms, or those turns of expression which do not belong to universal grammar, but of which every language has its own, that are exclusively proper to it. It will be easily understood, that when I speak of the difficulty of translating idioms, I do not mean those general modes of arrangement or construction which regulate a whole language, and which may not be common to it with other tongues: As, for example, the placing the adjective always before the substantive in English, which in French and in Latin is most commonly placed after it; the use of the participle in English, where the present tense is used in other languages; as he is writing, *scribit, il écrit*; the use of the preposition *to* before the infinitive in English, where the French use the preposition

de or *of*. These, which may be termed the *general* idioms of a language, are soon understood, and are exchanged for parallel idioms with the utmost ease. With regard to these a translator can never err, unless through affectation or choice.¹ For example, in translating the

¹ There is, however, a very common mistake of translators from the French into English, proceeding either from ignorance, or inattention to the general construction of the two languages. In narrative, or the description of past actions, the French often use the present tense for the preterite: *Deux jeunes nobles Mexicains jettent leurs armes, et viennent à lui comme déserteurs. Ils mettent un genouil à terre dans la posture des supplians; ils le saisissent, et s'élançant de la plateforme.—Cortez s'en débarasse, et se retient à la balustrade. Les deux jeunes nobles périssent sans avoir exécuté leur généreuse entreprise.* Let us observe the awkward effect of a similar use of the present tense in English. "Two young Mexicans of noble birth throw away their arms and come to him as deserters. They kneel in the posture of suppliants; they seize him, and throw themselves from the platform.—Cortez disengages himself from their grasp, and keeps hold of the ballustrade. The noble Mexicans perish without accomplishing their generous design." In like manner, the use of the present for the past tense is very common in Greek, and we frequently remark the same impropriety in English translations from that language. "After the death of Darius, and the accession of Artaxerxes, Tissaphernes accuses Cyrus to his brother of treason: Artaxerxes gives credit to the accusation, and orders Cyrus to be apprehended, with a design to put him to death; but his mother having saved him by her intercession, sends him back to his government." Spelman's *Xenophon*. In the original, these verbs are put in the present tense, διαβαλλει, πειθεται, συλλαμβανει, αποπεμπει. But this use of the present tense in narrative is contrary to the genius of the English language. The poets have assumed it; and in them it is allowable, because it is their object to paint scenes as present to the eye; *ut*

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French phrase, *Il profita d'un avis*, he may choose fashionably to say, in violation of the English construction, *he profited of an advice*; or, under the sanction of poetical licence, he may choose to engraft the idiom of one language into another, as Mr. Macpherson has done, where he says, "Him to *the strength of Hercules*, the lovely Astyochea bore;" Οὐ ΤΕΚΕΥ ΑΣΤΥΟΧΕΙΑ, βῆ Ηρακλεια· *Il*. lib. 2, l. 165. But it is not with regard to such idiomatic constructions, that a translator will ever find himself under any difficulty. It is in the translation of those particular idiomatic phrases of which every language has its own collection; phrases which are generally of a familiar nature, and which occur most commonly in conversation, or in that species of writing which approaches to the ease of conversation.

The translation is perfect, when the translator finds in his own language an idiomatic phrase

pictura poesis; but all that a prose narrative can pretend to, is an animated description of things past: if it goes any farther, it encroaches on the department of poetry. In one way, however, this use of the present tense is found in the best English historians, namely, in the summary heads, or contents of chapters. "Lambert Simnel invades England.—Perkin Warbeck is avowed by the Duchess of Burgundy—he returns to Scotland—he is taken prisoner—and executed." Hume. But it is by an ellipsis that the present tense comes to be thus used. The sentence at large would stand thus." *This chapter relates how Lambert Simnel invades England, how Perkin Warbeck is avowed by the Duchess of Burgundy,*" &c.

corresponding to that of the original. Montaigne (*Ess.* l. 1, c. 29) says of Gallio, "Lequel ayant été envoyé en exil en l'isle de Lesbos, on fut averti à Rome, *qu'il s'y donnoit du bon temps*, et que ce qu'on lui avoit enjoint pour peine, lui tournoit à commodité." The difficulty of translating this sentence lies in the idiomatic phrase, "*qu'il s'y donnoit du bon temps*." Cotton finding a parallel idiom in English, has translated the passage with becoming ease and spirit: "As it happened to one Gallio, who having been sent an exile to the isle of Lesbos, news was not long after brought to Rome, that *he there lived as merry as the day was long*; and that what had been enjoined him for a penance, turned out to his greatest pleasure and satisfaction." Thus, in another passage of the same author, (*Essais*, l. 1, c. 29) "*Si j'eusse été chef de part, j'eusse prins autre voye plus naturelle*." "*Had I rul'd the roast*, I should have taken another and more natural course." So likewise, (*Ess.* l. 1, c. 25) "Mais d'y enfoncer plus avant, et de *m'être rongé les ongles à l'étude d'Aristote*, monarche de la doctrine moderne." "But, to dive farther than that, and to have *cudgell'd my brains in the study of Aristotle*, the monarch of all modern learning." So, in the following passages from Terence, translated by Echard: "*Credo manibus pedibusque obnixè omnia facturum*," Andr. act 1. "I know he'll be at it tooth and nail." "*Herus, quantum audio, uxore excidit*," Andr. act 2.

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"For aught I perceive, my poor master may go whistle for a wife."

In like manner, the following colloquial phrases are capable of a perfect translation by corresponding idioms. *Rem acu tetigisti*, "You have hit the nail upon the head." *Mihi isthic nec seritur nec repitur*, Plaut. "That's no bread and butter of mine." *Omnem jecit aleam*, "It was neck or nothing with him." *Τι προς τ' αλφίτα*; Aristoph. *Nub.* "Will that make the pot boil?"

It is not perhaps possible to produce a happier instance of translation by corresponding idioms, than Sterne has given in the translation of *Slawkenbergius's Tale*. "*Nihil me pœnitet hujus nasi*, quoth Pamphagus; that is, My nose has been the making of me." "*Nec est cur pœniteat*;" that is, How the deuce should such a nose fail?" *Tristram Shandy*, vol. 3, ch. 7. "*Miles peregrini in faciem suspexit. Dî boni, nova forma nasi!*" The centinel look'd up into the stranger's face. —Never saw such a nose in his life!" *Ibid.*

/As there is nothing which so much conduces both to the ease and spirit of composition, as a happy use of idiomatic phrases, there is nothing which a translator, who has a moderate command of his own language, is so apt to carry to a licentious extreme./ Echard, whose translations of *Terence* and of *Plautus* have, upon the whole, much merit, is extremely censurable for his intemperate use of idiomatic phrases. In

the first act of the *Andria*, Davus thus speaks to himself :

*Enimvero, Dave, nihil loci est segnitiae neque socordiae.
Quantum intellexi senis sententiam de nuptiis :
Quæ si non astu providentur, me aut herum pessunda-
bunt ;
Nec quid agam certum est, Pamphilumne adjutem an
auscultem seni.*

TERENT. *Andr.* act 1, sc. 3.

The translation of this passage by Echard, exhibits a strain of vulgar petulance, which is very opposite to the chastened simplicity of the original.

"Why, seriously, poor Davy, 'tis high time to bestir thy stumps, and to leave off dozing ; at least, if a body may guess at the old man's meaning by his mumping. If these brains do not help me out at a dead lift, to pot goes Pilgarlick, or his master, for certain : and hang me for a dog, if I know which side to take ; whether to help my young master, or make fair with his father."

In the use of idiomatic phrases, a translator frequently forgets both the country of his original author, and the age in which he wrote ; and while he makes a Greek or a Roman speak French or English, he unwittingly puts into his mouth allusions to the manners of modern France or England.¹ This, to use a phrase

¹ It is surprising that this fault should meet even with approbation from so judicious a critic as Denham. In

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borrowed from painting, may be termed an offence against the *costume*. The proverbial expression, βαρπαχω ὑδωρ, in *Theocritus*, is of similar import with the English proverb, *to carry coals to Newcastle*; but it would be a gross impropriety to use this expression in the translation of an ancient classic. Cicero, in his oration for Archias, says, "*Persona quæ propter otium et studium minime in judiciis periculisque versata est.*" M. Patru has translated this, "Un homme que ses études et ses livres ont éloigné du commerce du *Palais*." The *Palais*, or the Old Palace of the kings of France, it is true, is the place where the parliament of Paris and the chief courts of justice were assembled for

the preface to his translation of the second book of the *Æneid* he says: "As speech is the apparel of our thoughts, so there are certain garbs and modes of speaking which vary with the times; the fashion of our clothes being not more subject to alteration, than that of our speech: and this I think Tacitus means by that which he calls *Sermonem temporis istius auribus accommodatum*, the delight of change being as due to the curiosity of the ear as of the eye: and therefore, if Virgil must needs speak English, it were fit he should speak, not only *as a man of this nation*, but *as a man of this age*." The translator's opinion is exemplified in his practice.

Infandum, Regina, jubes renovare dolorem.

"*Madam, when you command us to review
Our fate, you make our old wounds bleed anew.*"

Of such translation it may with truth be said, in the words of Francklin,

Thus Greece and Rome, in modern dress array'd,
Is but antiquity in masquerade.

the decision of causes; but it is just as absurd to make Cicero talk of his haranguing in the *Palais*, as it would be of his pleading in Westminster Hall. In this respect, Echard is most notoriously faulty: We find in every page of his translations of *Terence* and *Plautus*, the most incongruous jumble of ancient and of modern manners. He talks of the "Lord Chief Justice of Athens," *Jam tu autem nobis Præturam geris?* Pl. Epid. act 1, sc. 1, and says, "I will send him to Bridewell with his skin stripped over his ears," *Hominem irrigatum plagis pistori dabo*, Ibid. sc. 3. "I must expect to beat hemp in Bridewell all the days of my life," *Molendum mihi est usque in pistrina*, Ter. Phormio, act 2. "He looks as grave as an alderman," *Tristis severitas inest in vultu*, Ibid. Andria, act 5.—The same author makes the ancient heathen Romans and Greeks swear British and Christian oaths; such as "Fore George, Blood and ounds, Gadzookers, 'Sbuddikins, By the Lord Harry!" They are likewise well read in the books both of the Old and New Testament: "Good b'ye, Sir Solomon," says Gripus to Trachalion, *Salve, Thales!* Pl. Rudens, act 4, sc. 3; and Sosia thus vouches his own identity to Mercury, "By Jove I am he, and 'tis as true as the gospel," *Per Jovem juro, me esse, neque me falsum dicere*, Pl. Amphit. act 1, sc. 1.¹ The same ancients,

¹ The modern air of the following sentence is, however, not displeasing: Antipho asks Cherea, where he has

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in Mr. Echard's translation, are familiarly acquainted with the modern invention of gun-powder; "Had we but a mortar now to play upon them under the covert way, one bomb would make them scamper," *Fundam tibi nunc nimis vellem dari, ut tu illos procul hinc ex occulto cæderes, facerent fugam*, Ter. Eun. act 4. And as their soldiers swear and fight, so they must needs drink like the moderns: "This god can't afford one brandy-shop in all his dominions," *Ne thermopolium quidem ulum ille instruit*, Pl. Rud. act 2, sc. 9. In the same comedy, Plautus, who wrote 180 years before Christ, alludes to the battle of La Hogue, fought A.D. 1692. "I'll be as great as a king," says Gripus, "I'll have a *Royal Sun*¹ for pleasure, like the king of France, and sail about from port to port," *Navibus magnis mercaturam faciam*, Pl. Rud. act 4, sc. 2.

In the Latin poems of Pitcairne, we remark an uncommon felicity in cloathing pictures of modern manners in classical phraseology. In familiar poetry, and in pieces of a witty or humorous nature, this has often a very happy effect, and exalts the ridicule of the sentiment, or humour of the picture. But Pitcairne's fond-

bespoke supper; he answers, *Apud libertum Discum*, "At Discus the freedman's." Echard, with a happy familiarity, says, "At old Harry Platter's." Ter. Eun. act 3, sc. 5.

¹ Alluding to the French Admiral's ship *Le Soleil Royal*, beaten and disabled by Russell.

ness for the language of Horace, Ovid, and Lucretius, has led him sometimes into a gross violation of propriety, and the laws of good taste. In the translation of a Psalm, we are shocked when we find the Almighty addressed by the epithets of a heathen divinity, and his attributes celebrated in the language and allusions proper to the Pagan mythology. Thus, in the translation of the 104th Psalm, every one must be sensible of the glaring impropriety of the following expressions :

Dexteram invictam canimus, Jovemque
Qui triumphatis, hominum et Deorum
Præsidet regnis.

Quam tuæ virtus tremefecit orbem
Juppiter dextræ.

Et manus ventis tua Dædaleas
Assuit alas.

facilesque leges
Rebus imponis, quibus antra parent
Æoli.

Proluit siccam pluvialis æther
Barbam, et arentes humeros Atlantis.

Que foveat tellus, fluviumque regnum
Tethyos.

Juppiter carmen mihi semper.

Juppiter solus mihi rex.

In the entire translation of the Psalms by Johnston, we do not find a single instance of similar impropriety. And in the admirable

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version by Buchanan, there are (to my knowledge) only two passages which are censurable on that account. The one is the beginning of the 4th Psalm :

O Pater, O hominum *Divûmque* æterna potestas !

which is the first line of the speech of Venus to Jupiter, in the 10th *Æneid* : and the other is the beginning of Psalm lxxxii. where two entire lines, with the change of one syllable, are borrowed from Horace :

Regum timendorum in proprios greges,
Reges in ipsos imperium est *Jovæ*.

In the latter example, the poet probably judged that the change of *Jovis* into *Jovæ* removed all objection ; and Ruddiman has attempted to vindicate the *Divûm* of the former passage, by applying it to saints or angels : but allowing there were sufficient apology for both those words, the impropriety still remains ; for the associated ideas present themselves immediately to the mind, and we are justly offended with the literal adoption of an address to Jupiter in a hymn to the Creator.

✓ If a translator is bound, in general, to adhere with fidelity to the manners of the age and country to which his original belongs, there are some instances in which he will find it necessary to make a slight sacrifice to the manners of his modern readers. The ancients, in the expression of resentment or contempt, made use of many

epithets and appellations which sound extremely shocking to our more polished ears, because we never hear them employed but by the meanest and most degraded of the populace. By similar reasoning we must conclude, that those expressions conveyed no such mean or shocking ideas to the ancients, since we find them used by the most dignified and exalted characters. In the 19th book of the *Odyssey*, Melanthe, one of Penelope's maids, having vented her spleen against Ulysses, and treated him as a bold beggar who had intruded himself into the palace as a spy, is thus sharply reproved by the Queen :

Παντως θαρσαλεη κυον αδδεις, ουτι με ληθεις
Ερδουσα μεγα εργον, ο ση κεφαλη αναμαξεις.

These opprobrious epithets, in a literal translation, would sound extremely offensive from the lips of the περιφρων Πηνελοπεια, whom the poet has painted as a model of female dignity and propriety. Such translation, therefore, as conveying a picture different from what the poet intended, would be in reality injurious to his sense. Of this sort of refinement Mr. Hobbes had no idea ; and therefore he gives the epithets in their genuine purity and simplicity :

Bold bitch, said she, I know what deeds you've done,
Which thou shalt one day pay for with thy head.

We cannot fail, however, to perceive, that Mr. Pope has in fact been more faithful to the sense

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of his original, by accommodating the expressions of the speaker to that character which a modern reader must conceive to belong to her ;

Loquacious insolent, she cries, forbear !
'Thy head shall pay the forfeit of thy tongue.

A translator will often meet with idiomatic phrases in the original author, to which no corresponding idiom can be found in the language of the translation. As a literal translation of such phrases cannot be tolerated, the only resource is, to express the sense in plain and easy language. Cicero, in one of his letters to Papirius Pætus, says, "*Veni igitur, si vires, et discce jam προλεγομενας quas quæris ; etsi sus Minervam,*" Ep. ad Fam. 9, 18. The idiomatic phrase *si vires*, is capable of a perfect translation by a corresponding idiom ; but that which occurs in the latter part of the sentence, *etsi sus Minervam*, can neither be translated by a corresponding idiom, nor yet literally. Mr. Melmoth has thus happily expressed the sense of the whole passage : "If you have any spirit then, fly hither, and learn from our elegant bills of fare how to refine your own ; though, to do your talents justice, this is a sort of knowledge in which you are much superior to your instructors."—Pliny, in one of his epistles to Calvisius, thus addresses him, *Assem para, et accipe auream fabulam : fabulas immo : nam me priorum nova admonuit*, lib. 2; ep. 20. To this expression, *assem para*, &c. which

is a proverbial mode of speech, we have nothing that corresponds in English. To translate the phrase literally would have a poor effect : " Give me a penny, and take a golden story, or a story worth gold." Mr. Melmoth has given the sense in easy language : " Are you inclined to hear a story? or, if you please, two or three? for one brings to my mind another."

But this resource, of translating the idiomatic phrase into easy language, must fail, where the merit of the passage to be translated actually lies in that expression which is idiomatical. This will often occur in epigrams, many of which are therefore incapable of translation : Thus, in the following epigram, the point of wit lies in an idiomatic phrase, and is lost in every other language where the same precise idiom does not occur :

*On the wretched imitations of the Diable Boiteux of
Le Sage :*

Le Diable Boiteux est aimable ;
Le Sage y triomphe aujourd'hui ;
Tout ce qu'on a fait après lui
N'a pas valu le Diable.

We say in English, "'Tis not worth a fig," or, "'tis not worth a farthing ;" but we cannot say, as the French do, "'Tis not worth the devil ;" and therefore the epigram cannot be translated into English.

Somewhat of the same nature are the follow-

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ing lines of Marot, in his *Epître au Roi*, where the merit lies in the ludicrous *naïveté* of the last line, which is idiomatical, and has no strictly corresponding expression in English :

J'avois un jour un valet de Gascogne,
Gourmand, yvrogne, et assuré menteur,
Pipeur, larron, jureur, blasphémateur,
Sentant la hart de cent pas à la ronde :
Au demeurant le meilleur filz du monde.

Although we have idioms in English that are nearly similar to this, we have none which has the same *naïveté*, and therefore no justice can be done to this passage by any English translation.

In like manner, it appears to me impossible to convey, in any translation, the *naïveté* of the following remark on the fanciful labours of Etymologists : “Monsieur,—dans l'Etymologie il faut compter les voyelles pour rien, et les consonnes pour peu de chose.”

CHAPTER XII

DIFFICULTY OF TRANSLATING DON QUIXOTE,
FROM ITS IDIOMATIC PHRASEOLOGY.—OF
THE BEST TRANSLATIONS OF THAT RO-
MANCE.—COMPARISON OF THE TRANSLA-
TION BY MOTTEUX WITH THAT BY SMOLLET.

THERE is perhaps no book to which it is more difficult to do perfect justice in a translation than the *Don Quixote* of Cervantes. This difficulty arises from the extreme frequency of its idiomatic phrases. As the Spanish language is in itself highly idiomatical, even the narrative part of the book is on that account difficult; but the colloquial part is studiously filled with idioms, as one of the principal characters continually expresses himself in proverbs. Of this work there have been many English translations, executed, as may be supposed, with various degrees of merit. The two best of these, in my opinion, are the translations of Motteux and Smollet, both of them writers eminently well qualified for the task they undertook. It will not be foreign to the purpose of this Essay, if I shall here make a short comparative estimate of the merit of these translations.¹

¹ The translation published by Motteux declares in the title-page, that it is the work of several hands; but as of these Mr. Motteux was the principal, and revised and corrected the parts that were translated by others, which

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Smollet inherited from nature a strong sense of ridicule, a great fund of original humour, and a happy versatility of talent, by which he could accommodate his style to almost every species of writing. He could adopt alternately the solemn, the lively, the sarcastic, the burlesque, and the vulgar. To these qualifications he joined an inventive genius, and a vigorous imagination. As he possessed talents equal to the composition of original works of the same species with the romance of Cervantes; so it is not perhaps possible to conceive a writer more completely qualified to give a perfect translation of that romance.

Motteux, with no great abilities as an original writer, appears to me to have been endowed with a strong perception of the ridiculous in human character; a just discernment of the weaknesses and follies of mankind. He seems likewise to have had a great command of the various styles which are accommodated to the expression both of grave burlesque, and of low humour. Inferior to Smollet in inventive genius, he seems to have equalled him in every quality which was essentially requisite to a translator of *Don Quixote*. It may therefore be supposed, that the contest between them will be nearly equal, and the question of preference very difficult to be

indeed we have no means of discriminating from his own, I shall, in the following comparison, speak of him as the author of the whole work.

decided. It would have been so, had Smollet confided in his own strength, and bestowed on his task that time and labour which the length and difficulty of the work required : but Smollet too often wrote in such circumstances, that dispatch was his primary object. He found various English translations at hand, which he judged might save him the labour of a new composition. Jarvis could give him faithfully the sense of his author ; and it was necessary, only to polish his asperities, and lighten his heavy and awkward phraseology. To contend with Motteux, Smollet found it necessary to assume the armour of Jarvis. This author had purposely avoided, through the whole of his work, the smallest coincidence of expression with Motteux, whom, with equal presumption and injustice, he accuses in his preface of having "taken his version wholly from the French."¹ We find, therefore,

¹ The only French translation of *Don Quixote* I have ever seen, is that to which is subjoined a continuation of the Knight's adventures, in two supplemental volumes, by Le Sage. This translation has undergone numberless editions, and is therefore, I presume, the best ; perhaps indeed the only one, except a very old version, which is mentioned in the preface, as being quite literal, and very antiquated in its style. It is therefore to be presumed, that when Jarvis accuses Motteux of having taken his version entirely from the French, he refers to that translation above mentioned to which Le Sage has given a supplement. If this be the case, we may confidently affirm, that Jarvis has done Motteux the greatest injustice. On comparing his translation with the French, there is a discrepancy so absolute and universal, that there does not arise the smallest suspicion that he had ever seen

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both in the translation of Jarvis and in that of Smollet, which is little else than an improved edition of the former, that there is a studied

that version. Let any passage be compared *ad aperturam libri*; as, for example, the following :

“De simples huttes tenoient lieu de maisons, et de palais aux habitants de la terre ; les arbres se defaisant d’eux-memes de leurs écorces, leur fournissoient de quoi couvrir leurs cabanes, et se garantir de l’intempérie des saisons.”

“The tough and strenuous cork-trees did of themselves, and without other art than their native liberality, dismiss and impart their broad, light bark, which served to cover those lowly huts, propped up with rough-hewn stakes, that were first built as a shelter against the inclemencies of the air.”—MOTTEUX.

“La beaute n’étoit point un avantage dangereux aux jeunes filles ; elles alloient librement partout, etalant sans artifice et sans dessein tous les présents que leur avoit fait la Nature, sans se cacher davantage, qu’ autant que l’honnêteté commune à tous les siecles l’a toujours demandé.”

“Then was the time, when innocent beautiful young shepherdesses went tripping over the hills and vales, their lovely hair sometimes plaited, sometimes loose and flowing, clad in no other vestment but what was necessary to cover decently what modesty would always have concealed.”—MOTIEUX.

It will not, I believe, be asserted, that this version of Motteux bears any traces of being copied from the French, which is quite licentious and paraphrastical. But when we subjoin the original, we shall perceive, that he has given a very just and easy translation of the Spanish.

Los valientes alcornoques despidian de sí sin otro artificio que el de su cortesia, sus anchas y livianas cortezas, sin que se comenzaron á cubrir las casas, sobre rusticas, estacas sustentadas, no mas que para defensa de las inclemencias del cielo.

Entonces sí, que andaban las simples y hermosas zagalejas de valle en valle, y de otero en otero, en trenza y en cabello, sin mas vestidos de aquellos que eran menester para cubrir honestamente lo que la honestidad quiere.

rejection of the phraseology of Motteux. Now, Motteux, though he has frequently assumed too great a licence, both in adding to and retrenching from the ideas of his original, has upon the whole a very high degree of merit as a translator. In the adoption of corresponding idioms he has been eminently fortunate, and, as in these there is no great latitude, he has in general pre-occupied the appropriated phrases; so that a succeeding translator, who proceeded on the rule of invariably rejecting his phraseology, must have, in general, altered for the worse. Such, I have said, was the rule laid down by Jarvis, and by his copyist and improver, Smollet, who by thus absurdly rejecting what his own judgement and taste must have approved, has produced a composition decidedly inferior, on the whole, to that of Motteux. While I justify the opinion I have now given, by comparing several passages of both translations, I shall readily allow full credit to the performance of Smollet, wherever I find that there is a real superiority to the work of his rival translator.

After Don Quixote's unfortunate encounter with the Yanguesian carriers, in which the Knight, Sancho, and Rozinante, were all most grievously mauled, his faithful squire lays his master across his ass, and conducts him to the nearest inn, where a miserable bed is made up for him in a cock-loft. Cervantes then proceeds as follows :

En esta maldita cama se acostó Don Quixote : y luego la ventera y su hija le emplastáron de arriba abaxo, alumbrandoles Maritornes : que así se llamaba la Asturiana. Y como al vizmalle, viese la ventera tan acardenalado á partes á Don Quixote, dixo que aquello mas parecian golpes que caída. No fuéron golpes, dixo Sancho, sino que la peña tenia muchos picos y tropezones, y que cada uno habia hecho su cardinal, y tambien le dixo : haga vuestra merced, señora, de manera que queden algunas estopas, que no faltará quien las haya menester, que tambien me duelen á mí un poco los lomos. Desá manera, respondió la ventera, tambien debistes vos de caer? No caí, dico Sancho Panza, sino que del sobresalto que tome de ver caer á mí amo, de tal manera me duele á mí el cuerpo, que me parece que me han dado mil palos.

Translation by Motteux

“ In this ungracious bed was the Knight laid to rest his belaboured carcase ; and presently the hostess and her daughter anointed and plastered him all over, while Maritornes (for that was the name of the Asturian wench) held the candle. The hostess, while she greased him, wondering to see him so bruised all over, I fancy, said she, those bumps look much more like a dry beating than a fall. ’Twas no dry beating, mistress, I promise you, quoth Sancho ; but the rock had I know not how many cragged ends and knobs,

and every one of them gave my master a token of its kindness. And by the way, forsooth, continued he, I beseech you save a little of that same tow and ointment for me too, for I don't know what's the matter with my back, but I fancy I stand mainly in want of a little greasing too. What, I suppose you fell too, quoth the landlady. Not I, quoth Sancho, but the very fright that I took to see my master tumble down the rock, has so wrought upon my body, that I am as sore as if I had been sadly mauled."

Translation by Smollet

"In this wretched bed Don Quixote having laid himself down, was anointed from head to foot by the good woman and her daughter, while Maritornes (that was the Asturian's name) stood hard by, holding a light. The landlady, in the course of her application, perceiving the Knight's whole body black and blue, observed, that those marks seemed rather the effects of drubbing than of a fall; but Sancho affirmed she was mistaken, and that the marks in question were occasioned by the knobs and corners of the rocks among which he fell. And now, I think of it, said he, pray, Madam, manage matters so as to leave a little of your ointment, for it will be needed, I'll assure you: my own loins are none of the soundest at present. What, did you fall too, said she? I can't say I did, answered

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the squire ; but I was so infected by seeing my master tumble, that my whole body akes, as much as if I had been cudgelled without mercy."

Of these two translations, it will hardly be denied that Motteux's is both easier in point of style, and conveys more forcibly the humour of the dialogue in the original. A few contrasted phrases will shew clearly the superiority of the former.

Motteux. "In this ungracious bed was the Knight laid to rest his belaboured carcase."

Smollet. "In this wretched bed Don Quixote having laid himself down."

Motteux. "While Maritornes (for that was the name of the Asturian wench) held the candle."

Smollet. "While Maritornes (that was the Asturian's name) stood hard by, holding a light."

Motteux. "The hostess, while she greased him."

Smollet. "The landlady, in the course of her application."

Motteux. "I fancy, said she, those bumps look much more like a dry beating than a fall."

Smollet. "Observed, that those marks seemed rather the effect of drubbing than of a fall."

Motteux. "'Twas no dry beating, mistress, I promise you, quoth Sancho."

Smollet. "But Sancho affirmed she was in a mistake."

Motteux. "And, by the way, forsooth, continued he, I beseech you save a little of that same tow and ointment for me ; for I don't know what's the matter with my back, but I fancy I stand mainly in need of a little greasing too."

Smollet. "And now, I think of it, said he, pray, Madam, manage matters so as to leave a little of your ointment, for it will be needed, I'll assure you : my own loins are none of the soundest at present."

Motteux. "What, I suppose you fell too, quoth the landlady ? Not I, quoth Sancho, but the very fright," &c.

Smollet. "What, did you fall too, said she ? I can't say I did, answered the squire ; but I was so infected," &c.

There is not only more ease of expression and force of humour in Motteux's translation of the above passages than in Smollet's, but greater fidelity to the original. In one part, *no fueron golpes*, Smollet has improperly changed the first person for the third, or the colloquial style for the narrative, which materially weakens the spirit of the passage. *Cada uno habia hecho su cardenal* is most happily translated by Motteux, "every one of them gave him a token of its kindness ;" but in Smollet's version, this spirited clause of the sentence evaporates altogether.—*Algunas estopas* is more faithfully rendered by Motteux than by Smollet. In the latter part of the passage, when the hostess

jeeringly says to Sancho, *Desa manera tambien debistes vos de caer?* the squire, impatient to wipe off that sly insinuation against the veracity of his story, hastily answers, *No cai*. To this Motteux has done ample justice, "Not I, quoth Sancho." But Smollet, instead of the arch effrontery which the author meant to mark by this answer, gives a tame apologetic air to the squire's reply, "I can't say I did, answered the squire." *Don Quix.* par. 1, cap. 16.

Don Quixote and Sancho, travelling in the night through a desert valley, have their ears assailed at once by a combination of the most horrible sounds, the roaring of cataracts, clanking of chains, and loud strokes repeated at regular intervals; all which persuade the Knight, that his courage is immediately to be tried in a most perilous adventure. Under this impression, he felicitates himself on the immortal renown he is about to acquire, and brandishing his lance, thus addresses Sancho, whose joints are quaking with affright:

Asi que aprieta un poco las cinchas a Rocinante, y quedate a Dios, y asperame aqui hasta tres dias, no mas, en los quales si no volviere, puedes tú volverte á nuestra aldea, y desde allí, por hacermé merced y buena obra, irás al Toboso, donde dirás al incomparable señora mia Dulcinea, que su cautivo caballero murió por acometer cosas, que le hiciesen digno de poder llamarse suyo. *Don Quix.* par. 1, cap. 20.

Translation by Motteux

"Come, girth Rozinante straiter, and then Providence protect thee: Thou may'st stay for me here; but if I do not return in three days, go back to our village, and from thence, for my sake, to Toboso, where thou shalt say to my incomparable lady Dulcinea, that her faithful knight fell a sacrifice to love and honour, while he attempted things that might have made him worthy to be called her adorer."

Translation by Smollet

"Therefore straiten Rozinante's girth, recommend thyself to God, and wait for me in this place, three days at farthest; within which time if I come not back, thou mayest return to our village, and, as the last favour and service done to me, go from thence to Toboso, and inform my incomparable mistress Dulcinea, that her captive knight died in attempting things that might render him worthy to be called her lover."

On comparing these two translations, that of Smollet appears to me to have better preserved the ludicrous solemnity of the original. This is particularly observable in the beginning of the sentence, where there is a most humorous association of two counsels very opposite in their nature, the recommending himself to God, and girding Rozinante. In the request, "and as the last favour and service done to me, go from thence to Toboso;" the translations of Smollet

and Motteux are, perhaps, nearly equal in point of solemnity, but the simplicity of the original is better preserved by Smollet.¹

Sancho, after endeavouring in vain to dissuade his master from engaging in this perilous adventure, takes advantage of the darkness to tie Rozinante's legs together, and thus to prevent him from stirring from the spot; which being done, to divert the Knight's impatience under this supposed enchantment, he proceeds to tell him, in his usual strain of rustic buffoonery, a long story of a cock and a bull, which thus begins: "*Erase que se era, el bien que viniere para todos sea, y el mal para quien lo fuere á buscar; y advierta vuestra merced, señor mio, que el principio que los antiguos dieron a sus consejas, no fue así como quiera, que fue una sentencia de Caton Zonzorino Romano que dice, y el mal para quien lo fuere á buscar.*" Ibid.

In this passage, the chief difficulties that occur to the translator are, *first*, the beginning, which seems to be a customary prologue to a nursery-

¹ Perhaps a parody was here intended of the famous epitaph of Simonides, on the brave Spartans who fell at Thermopylæ:

Ω ξειν, αγγελων Λακεδαιμονιοις, οτι τηδε
Κειμεθα, τοις κεινων ρημασι πειθομενοι.

"O stranger, carry back the news to Lacedæmon, that we died here to prove our obedience to her laws." This, it will be observed, may be translated, or at least closely imitated, in the very words of Cervantes; *diras—que su caballero murio por acometer cosas, que le hiciesen digno de poder llamarse suyo.*

tale among the Spaniards, which must therefore be translated by a corresponding phraseology in English ; and *secondly*, the blunder of *Caton Zonzorino*. Both these are, I think, most happily hit off by Motteux. "In the days of yore, when it was as it was, good betide us all, and evil to him that evil seeks. And here, Sir, you are to take notice, that they of old did not begin their tales in an ordinary way ; for 'twas a saying of a wise man, whom they call'd Cato the Roman Tonsor, that said, Evil to him that evil seeks." Smollet thus translates the passage : "There was, so there was ; the good that shall fall betide us all ; and he that seeks evil may meet with the devil. Your worship may take notice, that the beginning of the ancient tales is not just what came into the head of the teller : no, they always began with some saying of Cato, the censor of Rome, like this, of "He that seeks evil may meet with the devil."

The beginning of the story, thus translated, has neither any meaning in itself, nor does it resemble the usual preface of a foolish tale. Instead of *Caton Zonzorino*, a blunder which apologises for the mention of Cato by such an ignorant clown as Sancho, we find the blunder rectified by Smollet, and Cato distinguished by his proper epithet of the Censor. This is a manifest impropriety in the last translator, for which no other cause can be assigned, than that his predecessor had preoccupied the blunder of

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Cato the Tonsor, which, though not a translation of *Zonzorino*, (the purblind), was yet a very happy parallelism.

In the course of the same cock-and-bull story, Sancho thus proceeds: "*Asi que, yendo dias y viniendo dias, el diablo que no duerme y que todo lo añasca, hizo de manera, que el amor que el pastor tenia á su pastora se volviese en omecillo y mala voluntad, y la causa fué segun malas lenguas, una cierta cantidad de zelillos que ella le dió, tales que pasaban de la raya, y llegaban á lo verado, y fue tanto lo que el pastor la aborreció de alli aaelante, que por on verla se quiso ausentar de aquella tierra, é irse donde sus ojos no la vieses jamas: la Toralva, que se vió desdeñada del Lope, luego le quiso bien mas que nunca le habia querido.*" Ibid.

Translation by Motteux

"Well, but, as you know, days come and go, and time and straw makes medlars ripe; so it happened, that after several days coming and going, the devil, who seldom lies dead in a ditch, but will have a finger in every pye, so brought it about, that the shepherd fell out with his sweetheart, insomuch that the love he bore her turned into dudgeon and ill-will; and the cause was, by report of some mischievous tale-carriers, that bore no good-will to either party, for that the shepherd thought her no better than she should be, a little loose i' the hilts, &c.¹

¹ One expression is omitted which is a little too gross.

Thereupon being grievous in the dumps about it, and now bitterly hating her, he e'en resolved to leave that country to get out of her sight: for now, as every dog has his day, the wench perceiving he came no longer a suitering to her, but rather toss'd his nose at her and shunn'd her, she began to love him, and doat upon him like any thing."

I believe it will be allowed, that the above translation not only conveys the complete sense and spirit of the original, but that it greatly improves upon its humour. When Smollet came to translate this passage, he must have severely felt the hardship of that law he had imposed on himself, of invariably rejecting the expressions of Motteux, who had in this instance been eminently fortunate. It will not therefore surprise us, if we find the new translator to have here failed as remarkably as his predecessor has succeeded.

Translation by Smollet

"And so, in process of time, the devil, who never sleeps, but *wants to have a finger in every pye*, managed matters in such a manner, that the shepherd's love for the shepherdess was turned into malice and deadly hate: and the cause, according to evil tongues, was a certain quantity of small jealousies she gave him, exceeding all bounds of measure. And such was the abhorrence the shepherd conceived for her, that, in order to avoid the sight of her, he resolved to absent

himself from his own country, and go where he should never set eyes on her again. Toralvo finding herself despised by Lope, began to love him more than ever."

Smollet, conscious that in the above passage Motteux had given the best possible *free* translation, and that he had supplanted him in the choice of corresponding idioms, seems to have piqued himself on a rigid adherence to the very *letter* of his original. The only English idiom, being a plagiarism from Motteux, "*wants to have a finger in every pye*," seems to have been adopted from absolute necessity: the Spanish phrase would not bear a literal version, and no other idiom was to be found but that which Motteux had preoccupied.

From an inflexible adherence to the same law, of invariably rejecting the phraseology of Motteux, we find in every page of this new translation numberless changes for the worse:

Se que no mira de mal ojo á la mochacha.

"I have observed he casts a sheep's eye at the wench." *Motteux.*

"I can perceive he has no dislike to the girl." *Smollet.*

Teresa me pusieron en el bautismo, nombre mondo y escueto, sin anadiduras, ni cortopizas, ni arrequives de Dones ni Donas.

"I was christened plain Teresa, without any fiddle-faddle, or addition of Madam, or Your Ladyship." *Motteux.*

"Teresa was I christened, a bare and simple name, without the addition, garniture, and embroidery of Don or Donna." *Smollet*.

Sigue tu cuenta, Sancho.

"Go on with thy story, Sancho." *Motteux*.

"Follow thy story, Sancho." *Smollet*.

Yo confieso que he andado algo risueño en demasta.

"I confess I carried the jest too far." *Motteux*.

"I see I have exceeded a little in my pleasantry." *Smollet*.

De mis viñas vengo, no se nada, no soy amigo de saber vidas ajenas.

"I never thrust my nose into other men's porridge; it's no bread and butter of mine: Every man for himself, and God for us all, say I." *Motteux*.

"I prune my own vine, and I know nothing about thine. I never meddle with other people's concerns." *Smollet*.

*Y advierta que ya tengo edad para dar consejos. Quien bien tiene, y mal escoge, por bien que se enoja, no se venga.*¹

"Come, Master, I have hair enough in my beard to make a counsellor: he that will not when he may, when he will he shall have nay." *Motteux*.

¹ Thus it stands in all the editions by the Royal Academy of Madrid; though in Lord Carteret's edition the latter part of the proverb is given thus, apparently with more propriety: *del mal que le viene no se enoja*.

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"Take notice that I am of an age to give good counsels. He that hath good in his view, and yet will not evil eschew, his folly deserveth to rue." *Smollet*. Rather than adopt a corresponding proverb, as *Motteux* has done, *Smollet* chuses, in this instance, and in many others, to make a proverb for himself, by giving a literal version of the original in a sort of doggerel rhyme.

Vive Roque, que es la señora nuestra amo mas ligera que un alcotan, y que puede enseñar al mas diestro Cordobes o Mexicano.

"By the Lord Harry, quoth Sancho, our Lady Mistress is as nimble as an eel. Let me be hang'd, if I don't think she might teach the best Jockey in Cordova or Mexico to mount a-horseback." *Motteux*.

"By St. Roque, cried Sancho, my Lady Mistress is as light as a hawk,¹ and can teach the most dexterous horseman to ride." *Smollet*.

The chapter which treats of the puppet-show, is well translated both by *Motteux* and *Smollet*. But the discourse of the boy who explains the story of the piece, in *Motteux's* translation, appears somewhat more consonant to the phraseology commonly used on such occasions: "Now, gentlemen, in the next place, mark that personage that peeps out there with a crown on

¹ *Mas ligera que un alcotan* is more literally translated by *Smollet* than by *Motteux*; but if *Smollet* piqued himself on fidelity, why was *Cordobes o Mexicano* omitted?

his head, and a sceptre in his hand : That's the Emperor Charlemain.—Mind how the Emperor turns his back upon him.—Don't you see that Moor ;—hear what a smack he gives on her sweet lips,—and see how she spits, and wipes her mouth with her white smock-sleeve. See how she takes on, and tears her hair for very madness, as if it was to blame for this affront.—Now mind what a din and hurly-burly there is.”

Motteux. This jargon appears to me to be more characteristic of the speaker than the following : “And that personage who now appears with a crown on his head and a sceptre in his hand, is the Emperor Charlemagne.—Behold how the Emperor turns about and walks off.—Don't you see that Moor ;—Now mind how he prints a kiss in the very middle of her lips, and with what eagerness she spits, and wipes them with the sleeve of her shift, lamenting aloud, and tearing for anger her beautiful hair, as if it had been guilty of the transgression.”¹

¹ Smollet has here mistaken the sense of the original, *como si ellos tuvieran la culpa del maleficio* : She did not blame the hair for being guilty of the transgression or offence, but for being the cause of the Moor's transgression, or, as Motteux has properly translated it, “this affront.” In another part of the same chapter, Smollet has likewise mistaken the sense of the original. When the boy remarks, that the Moors don't observe much form or ceremony in their judicial trials, Don Quixote contradicts him, and tells him there must always be a regular process and examination of evidence to prove matters of fact, “*para sacar una verdad en limpio menester son muchas pruebas y repruebas.*” Smollet applies this

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In the same scene of the puppet-show, the scraps of the old Moorish ballad are translated by Motteux with a corresponding *naïveté* of expression, which it seems to me impossible to exceed :

*Jugando está á las tablas Don Gayferos,
Que ya de Melisendra está olvidado.*

Now Gayferos the live-long day,
Oh, errant shame ! at draughts doth play ;
And, as at court most husbands do,
Forgets his lady fair and true. *Motteux.*

Now Gayferos at tables playing,
Of Melisendra thinks no more. *Smollet.*

*Caballero, si á Francia ides,
Por Gayferos preguntad.*

Quoth Melisendra, if perchance,
Sir Traveller, you go for France,
For pity's sake, ask, when you're there,
For Gayferos, my husband dear. *Motteux.*

Sir Knight, if you to France do go,
For Gayferos inquire. *Smollet.*

How miserably does the new translator sink in the above comparison ! Yet Smollet was a good poet, and most of the verse translations interspersed through this work are executed with ability. It is on this head that Motteux

observation of the Knight to the boy's long-winded story, and translates the passage, "There is not so much proof and counter proof required to bring truth to light." In both these passages Smollet has departed from his prototype, Jarvis.

has assumed to himself the greatest licence. He has very presumptuously mutilated the poetry of Cervantes, by leaving out many entire stanzas from the larger compositions, and suppressing some of the smaller altogether : Yet the translation of those parts which he has retained, is possessed of much poetical merit ; and in particular, those verses which are of a graver cast, are, in my opinion, superior to those of his rival. The song in the first volume, which in the original is intitled *Cancion de Grisóstomo*, and which Motteux has intitled, *The Despairing Lover*, is greatly abridged by the suppression of more than one half of the stanzas in the original ; but the translation, so far as it goes, is highly poetical. The translation of this song by Smollet, though inferior as a poem, is, perhaps, more valuable on the whole, because more complete. There is, however, only a single passage in which he maintains with Motteux a contest which is nearly equal :

O thou, whose cruelty and hate,
The tortures of my breast proclaim,
Behold, how willingly to fate
I offer this devoted frame.
If thou, when I am past all pain,
Shouldst think my fall deserves a tear,
Let not one single drop distain
Those eyes, so killing and so clear.
No ! rather let thy mirth display
The joys that in thy bosom flow :
Ah ! need I bid that heart be gay,
Which always triumph'd in my woe. *Smollet*

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It will be allowed that there is much merit in these lines, and that the last stanza in particular is eminently beautiful and delicate. Yet there is in my opinion an equal vein of poetry, and more passion, in the corresponding verses of Motteux :

O thou, by whose destructive hate
I'm hurry'd to this doleful fate,
When I'm no more, thy pity spare !
I dread thy tears ; oh, spare them then—
But, oh ! I rave, I was too vain—
My death can never cost a tear ! *Motteux.*

In the song of Cardenio, there is a happy combination of tenderness of expression with ingenious thought ; the versification is likewise of a peculiar structure, the second line forming an echo to the first. This song has been translated in a corresponding measure both by Motteux and Smollet ; but by the latter with far inferior merit.

CANCION DE CARDENIO

I

Quien menoscaba mis bienes ?
Desdenes.
Y quien aumenta mis duelos ?
Los Zelos.
Y quien prueba mi paciencia ?
Ausencia.
De ese modo en mî dolencia,
Ningun remedio se alcanza ;
Pues me matan la Esperanza,
Desdenes, Zelos, y Ausencia.

II

Quien me causa este dolor?

Amor.

Y quien mi gloria repuna?

Fortuna.

Y quien consiente mi duelo?

El Cielo.

De ese modo yo rezelo,
Morir deste mal extraño,
Pues se aunan en mi daño
Amor, Fortuna, y el Cielo.

III

Quien mejorará mi suerte?

La Muerte.

Y el bien de amor, quien le alcanza?

Mudanza.

Y sus malos quien los cura?

Locura.

De ese modo no es cordura
Querer curar la pasión;
Quando los remedios son
Muerte, Mudanza, y Locura.

CARDENIO'S SONG, by MOTTEUX

I

What makes me languish and complain?

O, 'tis *Disdain*!

What yet more fiercely tortures me?

'Tis *Jealousy*.

How have I my patience lost?

By *Absence* crost.

Then Hope, farewell, there's no relief;

I sink beneath oppressing grief;

Nor can a wretch, without despair,

Scorn, Jealousy, and Absence, bear.

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II

What in my breast this anguish drove?

Intruding *Love*.

Who could such mighty ills create?

Blind *Fortune's* hate.

What cruel powers my fate approve?

The *Powers* above.

Then let me bear, and cease to moan;

'Tis glorious thus to be undone:

When these invade, who dares oppose?

Heaven, Love, and Fortune are my foes.

III

Where shall I find a speedy cure?

Oh! *Death* is sure.

No milder means to set me free?

Inconstancy.

Can nothing else my pains assuage?

Distracting Rage.

What, die or change? Lucinda lose?

O let me rather madness chuse!

But judge, ye gods, what we endure,

When *death* or *madness* are a cure!

In the last four lines, Motteux has used more liberty with the thought of the original than is allowable for a translator. It must be owned, however, that he has much improved it.

CARDENIO'S SONG, by SMOLLET

I

Ah! what inspires my woful strain?

Unkind Disdain!

Ah! what augments my misery?

Fell Jealousy!

Or say what hath my patience worn?

An absent lover's scorn!

The torments then that I endure
 No mortal remedy can cure :
 For every languid hope is slain
 By Absence, Jealousy, Disdain.

II

From Love, my unrelenting foe,
 These sorrows flow :
 My infant glory's overthrown
 By Fortune's frown.
 Confirm'd in this my wretched state
 By the decrees of Fate,
 In death alone I hope release
 From this compounded dire disease,
 Whose cruel pangs to aggravate,
 Fortune and Love conspire with Fate !

III

Ah ! what will mitigate my doom ?
 The silent tomb.
 Ah ! what retrieve departed joy ?
 Inconstancy !
 Or say, can ought but frenzy bear
 This tempest of despair !
 All other efforts then are vain
 To cure this soul-tormenting pain,
 That owns no other remedy
 Than madness, death, inconstancy.

“ The torments then that I endure—no *mortal* remedy can cure.” Who ever heard of a *mortal* remedy? or who could expect to be cured by it? In the next line, the epithet of *languid* is injudiciously given to Hope in this place; for a *languid* or a *languishing* hope was already dying, and needed not so powerful a host of murderers

to *slay* it, as Absence, Jealousy, and Disdain.— In short, the latter translation appears to me to be on the whole of much inferior merit to the former. I have remarked, that Motteux excels his rival chiefly in the translation of those poems that are of a graver cast. But perhaps he is censurable for having thrown too much gravity into the poems that are interspersed in this work, as Smollet is blameable on the opposite account, of having given them too much the air of burlesque. In the song which Don Quixote composed while he was doing penance in the *Sierra-Morena*, beginning *Arboles, Yervas y Plantas*, every stanza of which ends with *Del Toboso*, the author intended, that the composition should be quite characteristic of its author, a ludicrous compound of gravity and absurdity. In the translation of Motteux there is perhaps too much gravity ; but Smollet has rendered the composition altogether burlesque. The same remark is applicable to the song of Antonio, beginning *Yo sé, Olalla, que me adoras*, and to many of the other poems.

On the whole, I am inclined to think, that the version of Motteux is by far the best we have yet seen of the Romance of Cervantes ; and that if corrected in its licentious abbreviations and enlargements, and in some other particulars which I have noticed in the course of this comparison, we should have nothing to desire superior to it in the way of translation.

CHAPTER XIII

OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF COMPOSITION,
WHICH RENDER TRANSLATION DIFFICULT.
—ANTIQUATED TERMS—NEW TERMS—
VERBA ARDENTIA.—SIMPLICITY OF THOUGHT
AND EXPRESSION—IN PROSE—IN POETRY.—
NAÏVETÉ IN THE LATTER.—CHAULIEU—
PARNELL—LA FONTAINE.—SERIES OF
MINUTE DISTINCTIONS MARKED BY CHA-
RACTERISTIC TERMS.—STRADA.—FLORID
STYLE AND VAGUE EXPRESSION.—PLINY'S
NATURAL HISTORY.

IN the two preceding chapters I have treated pretty fully of what I have considered as a principal difficulty in translation, the permutation of idioms. I shall in this chapter touch upon several other characteristics of composition, which, in proportion as they are found in original works, serve greatly to enhance the difficulty of doing complete justice to them in a translation.

1. The poets, in all languages, have a licence peculiar to themselves, of employing a mode of expression very remote from the diction of prose, and still more from that of ordinary speech. Under this licence, it is customary for them to use antiquated terms, to invent new ones, and to employ a glowing and rapturous phraseology, or what Cicero terms *Verba ardentia*. To do

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justice to these peculiarities in a translation, by adopting similar terms and phrases, will be found extremely difficult ; yet, without such assimilation, the translation presents no just copy of the original.) It would require no ordinary skill to transfuse into another language the thoughts of the following passages, in a similar species of phraseology :

Antiquated Terms :

For Nature crescent doth not grow alone
In thews and bulk ; but as this temple waxes,
The inward service of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves thee now,
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch
The virtue of his will.

SHAK. *Hamlet*, act 1.

New Terms :

So over many a tract
Of heaven they march'd, and many a province wide,
Tenfold the length of this terrene : at last
Far in th' horizon to the north appear'd
From skirt to skirt a fiery region, stretcht
In battailous aspect, and nearer view
Bristl'd with upright beams innumerable
Of rigid spears, and helmets throng'd, and shields
Various with boastful argument pourtrayed.

Paradise Lost, b. 6.

All come to this ? the hearts
That spaniel'd me at heels, to whom I gave
Their wishes, do discandy.

SHAK. *Ant. & Cleop.* act 4, sc. 10.

Glowing Phraseology, or *Verba ardentia* :

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er ye are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness defend you
From seasons such as these? Oh, I have ta'en
Too little care of this : Take physic, pomp!
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou may'st shake the superflux to them,
And show the heavens more just.

SHAK. *K. Lear.*

Tremble, thou wretch,
That hast within thee undivulged crimes,
Unwhipt of justice! Hide thee, thou bloody hand;
Thou perjure, and thou simular of virtue,
That art incestuous! Caitiff, shake to pieces,
That under covert and convenient seeming
Hast practis'd on man's life! Close pent up guilts,
Rive your concealing continents, and ask
Those dreadful summoners grace. *Ibid.*

Can any mortal mixture of Earth's mould,
Breathe such divine, enchanting ravishment?
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
And with these raptures moves the vocal air
To testify his hidden residence :
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night ;
At every fall smoothing the raven down
Of darkness till it smil'd : I have oft heard,
Amidst the flow'ry kirtled Naiades,
My mother Circe, with the Sirens three,
Culling their potent herbs and baleful drugs,
Who, as they sung, would take the poison'd soul
And lap it in Elysium.—

But such a sacred, and home-felt delight,
Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
I never heard till now.

MILTON's *Comus.*

2. There is nothing more difficult to imitate successfully in a translation than that species of composition which conveys just, simple, and natural thoughts, in plain, unaffected, and perfectly appropriate terms; and which rejects all those *aucupia sermonis*, those *lenocinia verborum*, which constitute what is properly termed *florid writing*. It is much easier to imitate in a translation that kind of composition (provided it be at all intelligible),¹ which is brilliant and rhetorical, which employs frequent antitheses, allusions, similes, metaphors, than it is to give a perfect copy of just, apposite, and natural sentiments, which are clothed in pure and simple language: For the former characters are strong and prominent, and therefore easily caught; whereas the latter have no striking attractions, their merit eludes altogether the general observation, and is discernible only to the most correct and chastened taste.

It would be difficult to approach to the beautiful simplicity of expression of the following passages, in any translation.

"In those vernal seasons of the year, when the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against Nature, not to go out to see her riches, and partake in her rejoicing

¹ I add this qualification not without reason, as I intend afterwards to give an example of a species of florid writing which is difficult to be translated, because its meaning cannot be apprehended with precision.

with heaven and earth." Milton's *Tract of Education*.

"Can I be made capable of such great expectations, which those animals know nothing of, (happier by far in this regard than I am, if we must die alike), only to be disappointed at last? Thus placed, just upon the confines of another, better world, and fed with hopes of penetrating into it, and enjoying it, only to make a short appearance here, and then to be shut out and totally sunk? Must I then, when I bid my last farewell to these walks, when I close these lids, and yonder blue regions and all this scene darken upon me and go out; must I then only serve to furnish dust to be mingled with the ashes of these herds and plants, or with this dirt under my feet? Have I been set so far above them in life, only to be levelled with them at death?" Wollaston's *Rel. of Nature*, sect. ix.

3. The union of just and delicate sentiments with simplicity of expression, is more rarely found in poetical composition than in prose; because the enthusiasm of poetry prompts rather to what is brilliant than what is just, and is always led to clothe its conceptions in that species of figurative language which is very opposite to simplicity. It is natural, therefore, to conclude, that in those few instances which are to be found of a chastened simplicity of thought and expression in poetry, the difficulty

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of transfusing the same character into a translation will be great, in proportion to the difficulty of attaining it in the original. Of this character are the following beautiful passages from Chaulieu :

Fontenay, lieu délicieux
Où je vis d'abord la lumière,
Bientot au bout de ma carrière,
Chez toi je joindrai mes ayeux.
Muses, qui dans ce lieu champêtre
Avec soin me fites nourir,
Beaux arbres, qui m'avez vu naître,
Bientot vous me verrez mourir.

Les louanges de la vie champêtre.

Je touche aux derniers instans
De mes plus belles années,
Et déjà de mon printems
Toutes les fleurs sont fanées.
Je ne vois, et n'envisage
Pour mon arriere saison,
Que le malheur d'être sage,
Et l'inutile avantage
De connoître la raison.

Autrefois mon ignorance
Me fournissoit des plaisirs ;
Les erreurs de l'espérance
Faisoient naître mes desirs.
A present l'expérience
M'apprend que la jouissance
De nos biens les plus parfaits
Ne vaut pas l'impatience
Ni l'ardeur de nos souhaits.
La Fortune à ma jeunesse
Offrit l'éclat des grandeurs ;
Comme un autre avec souplesse
J'aurois brigué ses faveurs.

Mais sur le peu de mérite
 De ceux qu' elle a bien traités,
 J'eus honte de la poursuite
 De ses aveugles bontés ;
 Et je passai, quoique donne
 D'éclat, et pourpre, et couronne,
 Du mépris de la personne,
 Au mépris des dignités.¹

Poesies diverses de Chaulieu, p. 44.

¹ The following translation of these verses by Parnell, is at once a proof that this excellent poet felt the characteristic merit of the original, and that he was unable completely to attain it.

My change arrives ; the change I meet
 Before I thought it nigh ;
 My spring, my years of pleasure fleet,
 And all their beauties die.
 In age I search, and only find
 A poor unfruitful gain,
 Grave wisdom stalking slow behind,
 Oppress'd with loads of pain.

My ignorance could once beguile,
 And fancied joys inspire ;
 My errors cherish'd hope to smile
 On newly born desire.
 But now experience shews the bliss
 For which I fondly sought,
 Not worth the long impatient wish
 And ardour of the thought.

My youth met fortune fair array'd,
 In all her pomp she shone,
 And might perhaps have well essay'd
 To make her gifts my own.
 But when I saw the blessings show'r
 On some unworthy mind,
 I left the chace, and own'd the power
 Was justly painted blind.

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(4. The foregoing examples exhibit a species of composition, which uniting just and natural sentiments with simplicity of expression, preserves at the same time a considerable portion of elevation and dignity. But there is another species of composition, which, possessing the same union of natural sentiments with simplicity of expression, is essentially distinguished from the former by its always partaking, in a considerable degree, of comic humour. This is that kind of writing which the French characterise by the term *naïf*, and for which we have no perfectly corresponding expression in English. "Le naïf," says Fontenelle, "est une nuance du bas."

In the following fable of Phædrus, there is a *naïveté*, which I think it is scarcely possible to transfuse into any translation :

Inops potentem dum vult imitari, perit.

In prato quædam rana conspexit bovem ;
Et tacta invidiâ tantæ magnitudinis
Rugosam inflavit pellem : tum natos suos
Interrogavit, *an bove esset latior.*

I pass'd the glories which adorn
The splendid courts of kings,
And while the persons mov'd my scorn,
I rose to scorn the things.

In this translation, which has the merit of faithfully transfusing the sense of the original, with a great portion of its simplicity of expression, the following couplet is a very faulty deviation from that character of the style.

My errors cherish'd hope to smile
On newly born desire.

Illi negarunt. Rursus intendit cutem
 Majore nisu, et simili quæsit modo
Quis major esset? Illi dixerunt, *bovem.*
 Novissimè indignata, dum vult validius
 Inflare sese, rupto jacuit corpore.

It would be extremely difficult to attain, in any translation, the laconic brevity with which this story is told. There is not a single word which can be termed superfluous; yet there is nothing wanting to complete the effect of the picture. The gravity, likewise, of the narrative when applied to describe an action of the most consummate absurdity; the self-important, but anxious questions, and the mortifying dryness of the answers, furnish an example of a delicate species of humour, which cannot easily be conveyed by corresponding terms in another language. La Fontaine was better qualified than any another for this attempt. He saw the merits of the original, and has endeavoured to rival them; but even La Fontaine has failed.

Une Grenouille vit un boeuf
 Qui lui sembla de belle taille.
 Elle, qui n'étoit pas grosse en tout comme un oeuf,
 Envieuse s'étend, et s'enfle, et se travaille
 Pour égaler l'animal en grosseur;
 Disant, Regardez bien ma soeur,
 Est ce assez, dites moi, n'y suis-je pas encore?
 Nenni. M'y voila donc? Point du tout. M'y voila
 Vous n'en approchez point. La chetive pecore
 S'enfla si bien qu'elle creva.

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Le monde est plein de gens qui ne sont pas plus sages,
Tout bourgeois veut bâtir comme les grands seigneurs ;
Tout prince a des ambassadeurs,
Tout marquis veut avoir des pages.

But La Fontaine himself when original, is equally inimitable. The source of that *naïveté* which is the characteristic of his fables, has been ingeniously developed by Marmontel : " Ce n'est pas un poète qui imagine, ce n'est pas un conteur qui plaisante ; c'est un témoin présent à l'action, et qui veut vous rendre présent vous-même. Il met tout en oeuvre de la meilleure foi du monde pour vous persuader ; et ce sont tous ces efforts, c'est le sérieux avec lequel il mêle les plus grandes choses avec les plus petites ; c'est l'importance qu'il attache à des jeux d'enfants ; c'est l'intérêt qu'il prend pour un lapin et une belette, qui font qu'on est tenté de s'écrier à chaque instant, *Le bon homme !* On le disoit de lui dans la société. Son caractère n'a fait que passer dans ses fables. C'est du fond de ce caractère que sont émanés ces tours si naturels, ces expressions si naïves, ces images si fideles."

It would require most uncommon powers to do justice in a translation to the natural and easy humour which characterises the dialogue in the following fable :

Les animaux malades de la Peste.

Un mal qui répand la terreur,
Mal que le ciel en sa fureur

Inventa pour punir les crimes de la terre,
La peste, (puis qu'il faut l'appeler par son nom),
Capable d'enrichir en un jour L'Acheron,
Faisoit aux animaux la guerre.
Ils ne mouroient pas tous, mais tous étoient frappés.
On n'en voyoit point d'occupés
A chercher le soutien d'une mourante vie ;
Nul mets n'excitoit leur envie.
Ni loups ni renards n'épioient
La douce et l'innocente proie.
Les tourterelles se fuyoient ;
Plus d'amour, partant plus de joye.
Le Lion tint conseil, et dit, Mes chers amis,
Je crois que le ciel a permis
Pour nos pechés cette infortune :
Que le plus coupable de nous
Se sacrifie aux traits du céleste courroux ;
Peut-être il obtiendra la guérison commune.
L'histoire nous apprend qu'en de tels accidents,
On fait de pareils dévoûemens :
Ne nous flattons donc point, voions sans indulgence
L'état de notre conscience.
Pour moi, satisfaisant mes appetits gloutons
J'ai dévoré force moutons ;
Que m'avoient-ils fait ? Nulle offense :
Même il m'est arrivé quelquefois de manger le Berger.
Je me dévoûrai donc, s'il le faut ; mais je pense
Qu'il est bon que chacun s'accuse ainsi que moi ;
Car on doit souhaiter, selon toute justice,
Que le plus coupable périsse.
Sire, dit le Renard, vous êtes trop bon roi ;
Vos scrupules font voir trop de délicatesse ;
Eh bien, manger moutons, canaille, sotté espece,
Est-ce un péché ? Non, non : Vous leur fîtes, seigneur,
En les croquant beaucoup d'honneur :
Et quant au Berger, l'on peut dire
Qu'il étoit digne de tous maux,
Etant de ces gens-là qui sur les animaux

Se font un chimérique empire.
 Ainsi dit le Renard, et flatteurs d'applaudir.
 On n'osa trop approfondir
 Du Tigre, ni de l'Ours, ni des autres puissances
 Les moins pardonnables offenses.
 Tous les gens querelleurs, jusqu'aux simples mâtons
 Au dire de chacun, étoient de petits saints.
 L'âne vint à son tour, et dit, J'ai souvenance
 Qu'en un pré de moines passant,
 La faim, l'occasion, l'herbe tendre, et je pense
 Quelque diable aussi me poussant,
 Je tondis de ce pré la largeur de ma langue :
 Je n'en avois nul droit, puisqu'il faut parler net.
 À ces mots on cria haro sur le baudet :
 Un loup quelque peu clerc prouva par sa harangue
 Qu'il falloit dévouer ce maudit animal,
 Ce pelé, ce galeux, d'ou venoit tout leur mal.
 Sa peccadille fut jugée un cas pendable ;
 Manger l'herbe d'autrui, quel crime abominable !
 Rien que la mort n'étoit capable
 D'expier son forfait, on le lui fit bien voir.
 Selon que vous serez puissant ou misérable,
 Les jugements de cour vous rendront blanc ou noir.

5. No compositions will be found more difficult to be translated, than those descriptions, in which a series of minute distinctions are marked by characteristic terms, each peculiarly appropriated to the thing to be designed, but many of them so nearly synonymous, or so approaching to each other, as to be clearly understood only by those who possess the most critical knowledge of the language of the original, and a very competent skill in the subject treated of.) I have always regarded Strada's *Contest of the Musician*

and Nightingale, as a composition which almost bids defiance to the art of a translator. The reader will easily perceive the extreme difficulty of giving the full, distinct, and appropriate meaning of those expressions marked in *Italics*.

Jam Sol a medio pronus deflexerat orbe,
Mitius e radiis vibrans crinalibus ignem :
Cum fidicen propter Tiberina fluenta, sonanti
Lenibat plectro curas, æstumque levabat,
Ilice defensus nigra, scenaque virenti.
Audiit hunc hospes sylvæ philomela propinquæ,
Musa loci, nemoris Siren, innoxia Siren ;
Et prope succedens stetit abdita frondibus, altè
Accipiens sonitum, secumque remurmurat, et quos
Ille modos variat digitis, hæc gutture reddit.

Sensit se fidicen philomela imitante referri,
Et placuit ludum volucris dare ; plenius ergo
Explorat citharam, tentamentumque futuræ
Præbeat ut pugnæ, percurrit protinus omnes
Impulsu pernixe fides. Nec segnius illa
Mille per excurrens variæ discrimina vocis,
Venturi specimen præfert argutula cantûs.

Tunc fidicen per fila movens trepidantia dextram,
Nunc contemnenti similis *diverberat ungue*,
Depectitque pari chordas et simplice ductu :
Nunc carptim replicat, digitisque micantibus urget,
Fila minutatim, celerique repercutit ictu.
Mox silet. Illa modis totidem respondet, et artem
Arte refert. Nunc, ceu rudis aut incerta canendi,
Projicit in longum, *nulloque plicatile flexu*,
Carmen init simili serie, jugique tenore
Præbet iter liquidum labenti e pectore voci :
Nunc *cæsim variat, modulisque canora minutis*
Delibrat vocem, tremuloque reciprocatur ore.

Miratur fidicen parvis è faucibus ire
 Tam varium, tam dulce melos : majoraque tentans,
Alternat mira arte fides ; dum torquet acutas
Inciditque, graves operoso verbere pulsat,
 Permiscetque simul *certantia rauca sonoris ;*
 Ceu resides in bella viros clangore lacesat.
 Hoc etiam philomela canit : dumque ore liquenti
Vibrat acuta sonum, modulisque interplicat æquis ;
 Ex inopinato gravis intonat, et leve murmur
Turbinat introrsus, alternantique sonore,
Clarat et infuscat, ceu martia classica pulset.

Scilicet erubuit fidicen, iraque calente,
 Aut non hoc, inquit, referes, citharistia sylvæ,
 Aut fractâ cedam citharâ. Nec plura locutus,
 Non imitabilibus plectrum concentibus urget.
 Namque manu per fila volat, simul hos, simul illos
 Explorat numeros, chordâque laborat in omni ;
 Et *strepit et tinnit*, crescitque superbius, et se
Multiplicat relegens, plenoque choreumate plaudit.
 Tum stetit expectans si quid paret æmula contra.

Illa autem, quanquam vox dudum exercita fauces
 Asperat, impatiens vinci, simul advocat omnes
 Necquicquam vires : nam dum discrimina tanta
 Reddere tot fidium nativa et simplice tentat
 Voce, canaliculisque initari grandia parvis,
 Impar magnanimis ausis, imparque dolori,
 Deficit, et vitam summo in certamine linquens,
 Victoris cadit in plectrum, par nacta sepulchrum.

He that should attempt a translation of this most artful composition, *dum tentat discrimina tanta reddere*, would probably, like the nightingale, find himself *impar magnanimis ausis*.¹

¹ The attempt, however, has been made. In a little volume, intitled *Prolusiones Poeticæ*, by the Reverend T. Bancroft, printed at Chester 1788, is a version of the *Fidicinis et Philomelæ certamen*, which will please every

It must be here remarked, that Strada has not the merit of originality in this characteristic description of the song of the Nightingale. He found it in Pliny, and with still greater amplitude, and variety of discrimination. He seems even to have taken from that author the hint of his fable: "Digna miratu avis. Primum, tanta vox tam parvo in corpusculo, tam pertinax spiritus. Deinde in una perfecta musicæ scientia modulatus ceditur sonus; et nunc continuo spiritu trahitur in longum, nunc variatur inflexo, nunc distinguitur conciso, copulatur intorto, promittitur revocato, infuscat ex inopinato: interdum et secum ipse murmurat, plenus, gravis, acutus, creber, extentus; ubi visum est vibrans, summus, medius, imus. Breviterque omnia tam parvulis in faucibus, quæ tot exquisitis tibiæ tormentis ars hominum excogitavit.—Certant inter se, palamque animosa contentio est. Victa morte finit sæpe vitam, spiritu prius deficiente quam cantu." Plin. *Nat. Hist.* lib. 10, c. 29.

It would perhaps be still more difficult to give a perfect translation of this passage from Pliny, than of the fable of Strada. The attempt, however, has been made by an old English author,

reader of taste who forbears to compare it with the original; and in the Poems of Pattison, the ingenious author of the *Epistle of Abelard to Eloisa*, is a fable, intitled, the *Nightingale and Shepherd*, imitated from Strada. But both these performances serve only to convince us, that a just translation of that composition is a thing almost impossible.

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Philemon Holland ; and it is curious to remark the extraordinary shifts to which he has been reduced in the search of corresponding expressions :

Explorat numeros, chordaque laborat in omni.

“Surely this bird is not to be set in the last place of those that deserve admiration ; for is it not a wonder, that so loud and clear a voice should come from so little a body ? Is it not as strange, that shee should hold her wind so long, and continue with it as shee doth ? Moreover, shee alone in her song keepeth time and measure truly, she riseth and falleth in her note just with the rules of music, and perfect harmony ; for one while, in one entire breath she drawes out her tune at length treatable ; another while she quavereth, and goeth away as fast in her running points : sometimes she maketh stops and short cuts in her notes ; another time she gathereth in her wind, and singeth descant between the plain song : she fetcheth in her breath again, and then you shall have her in her catches and divisions : anon, all on a sudden, before a man would think it, she drowneth her voice that one can scarce heare her ; now and then she seemeth to record to herself, and then she breaketh out to sing voluntarie. In sum, she varieth and altereth her voice to all keies : one while full of her largs, longs, briefs, semibriefs, and minims ; another while in her crotchets, quavers, semiquavers, and

double semiquavers: for at one time you shall hear her voice full of loud, another time as low; and anon shrill and on high; thick and short when she list; drawn out at leisure again when she is disposed; and then, (if she be so pleased), shee riseth and mounteth up aloft, as it were wit a wind organ. Thus shee altereth from one to another, and sings all parts, the treble, the mean, and the base. To conclude, there is not a pipe or instrument devised with all the art and cunning of man, that can afford more musick than this pretty bird doth out of that little throat of hers. —They strive who can do best, and one laboreth to excel another in variety of song and long continuance; yea, and evident it is that they contend in good earnest with all their will and power: for oftentimes she that hath the worse, and is not able to hold out with another, dieth for it, and sooner giveth she up her vitall breath, than giveth over her song.”

The consideration of the above passage in the original, leads to the following remark.

5. There is no species of writing so difficult to be translated, as that where the character of the style is florid, and the expression consequently vague, and of indefinite meaning. The natural history of Pliny furnishes innumerable examples of this fault; and hence it will ever be found one of the most difficult works to be translated. A short chapter shall be here analyzed, as an instructive specimen.

Lib. 11, Cap. 2.

In magnis siquidem corporibus, aut certe majoribus, facilis officina sequaci materia fuit. In his tam parvis atque tam nullis, quæ ratio, quanta vis, quam inextricabilis perfectio! Ubi tot sensus collocavit in culice? Et sunt alia dictu minora. Sed ubi visum in eo prætendit? Ubi gustatum applicavit? Ubi odoratum inseruit? Ubi vero truculentam illam et portione maximam vocem ingeneravit? Qua subtilitate pennas adnexuit? Prælongavit pedum crura? disposuit jejunam caveam, uti alvum? Avidam sanguinis et potissimum humani sitim accendit? Telum vero perfodiendo tergori, quo spiculavit ingenio? Atque ut in capaci, cum cerni non possit exilitas, ita reciproca geminavit arte, ut fodiendo acuminatum, pariter sorbendoque fistulosum esset. Quos teredini ad perforanda robora cum sono teste dentes affixit? Potissimumque e ligno cibatum fecit? Sed turrigeros elephantorum miramur humeros, taurorumque colla, et truces in sublime jactus, tigrium rapinas, leonum jubas; cum rerum natura nusquam magis quam in minimis tota sit. Quapropter quæso, ne hæc legentes, quoniam ex his spernunt multa, etiam relata fastidio damnent, cum in contemplatione naturæ, nihil possit videri supervacuum.

Although, after the perusal of the whole of this chapter, we are at no loss to understand its general

meaning, yet when it is taken to pieces, we shall find it extremely difficult to give a precise interpretation, much less an elegant translation of its single sentences. The latter indeed may be accounted impossible, without the exercise of such liberties as will render the version rather a paraphrase than a translation. *In magnis siquidem corporibus, aut certe majoribus, facilis officina sequaci materiæ fuit.* The sense of the term *magnus*, which is in itself indefinite, becomes in this sentence much more so, from its opposition to *major*; and the reader is quite at a loss to know, whether in those two classes of animals, the *magni* and the *maiores*, the largest animals are signified by the former term, or by the latter. Had the opposition been between *magnus* and *maximus*, or *major* and *maximus*, there could not have been the smallest ambiguity. *Facilis officina sequaci materiæ fuit.* *Officina* is the workhouse where an artist exercises his craft; but no author, except Pliny himself, ever employed it to signify the labour of the artist. With a similar incorrectness of expression, which, however, is justified by general use, the French employ *cuisine* to signify both the place where victuals are dressed, and the art of dressing them. *Sequax materia* signifies pliable materials, and therefore easily wrought; but the term *sequax* cannot be applied with any propriety to such materials as are easily wrought, on account of their magnitude or abundance. *Tam parvis*

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is easily understood, but *tam nullis* has either no meaning at all, or a very obscure one. *Inextricabilis perfectio*. It is no perfection in anything to be inextricable; for the meaning of inextricable is, embroiled, perplexed, and confounded. *Ubi tot sensus collocavit in culice?* What is the meaning of the question *ubi*? Does it mean, in what part of the body of the gnat? I conceive it can mean nothing else: And if so, the question is absurd; for all the senses of a gnat are not placed in any *one* part of its body, any more than the senses of a man. *Dictu minora*. By these words the author intended to convey the meaning of *alia etiam minora possunt dici*; but the meaning which he has actually conveyed is, *Sunt alia minora quam quæ dici possunt*, which is false and hyperbolic; for no insect is so small that words may not be found to convey an idea of its size. *Portione maximam vocem ingeneravit*. What is *portione maximam*? It is only from the context that we guess the author's meaning to be, *maximam ratione portionis*, i. e. *magnitudinis insecti*; for neither use, nor the analogy of the language, justify such an expression as *vocem maximam portione*. If it is alledged, that *portio* is here used to signify the power or intensity of the voice, and is synonymous in this place to *vis*, *επερεια*, we may safely assert, that this use of the term is licentious, improper, and unwarranted by custom. *Jejunam caveam uti alvum*; "a

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hungry cavity for a belly:" but is not the stomach of all animals a hungry cavity, as well as that of the gnat? *Capaci cum cernere non potest exilitas*. *Capax* is improperly contrasted with *exilis*, and cannot be otherwise translated than in the sense of *magnus*. *Reciproca geminavit arte* is incapable of any translation which shall render the proper sense of the words, "doubled with reciprocal art." The author's meaning is, "fitted for a double function." *Cum sono teste* is guessed from the context to mean, *uti sonus testatur*. *Cum rerum natura nusquam magis quam in minimis tota sit*. This is a very obscure expression of a plain sentiment, "The wisdom and power of Providence, or of Nature, is never more conspicuous than in the smallest bodies." *Ex his spernunt multa*. The meaning of *ex his* is indefinite, and therefore obscure: we can but conjecture that it means *ex rebus hujusmodi*; and not *ex his quæ diximus*; for that sense is reserved for *relata*.

From this specimen, we may judge of the difficulty of giving a *just translation* of Pliny's *Natural History*.

CHAPTER XIV

OF BURLESQUE TRANSLATION.—TRAVESTY
AND PARODY.—SCARRON'S VIRGILE TRA-
VESTI.—ANOTHER SPECIES OF LUDICROUS
TRANSLATION.

IN a preceding chapter, while treating of the translation of idiomatic phrases, we censured the use of such idioms in the translation as do not correspond with the age or country of the original. There is, however, one species of translation, in which that violation of the *costume* is not only blameless, but seems essential to the nature of the composition : I mean burlesque translation, or Travesty. This species of writing partakes, in a great degree, of original composition ; and is therefore not to be measured by the laws of serious translation. It conveys neither a just picture of the sentiments, nor a faithful representation of the style and manner of the original ; but pleases itself in exhibiting a ludicrous caricatura of both. It displays an overcharged and grotesque resemblance, and excites our risible emotions by the incongruous association of dignity and meanness, wisdom and absurdity. This association forms equally the basis of Travesty and of Ludicrous Parody, from which it is no otherwise distinguished than by its assuming a different language from the

original. In order that the mimickry may be understood, it is necessary that the writer choose, for the exercise of his talents, a work that is well known, and of great reputation. Whether that reputation is deserved or unjust, the work may be equally the subject of burlesque imitation. If it has been the subject of general, but undeserved praise, a Parody or a Travesty is then a fair satire on the false taste of the original author, and his admirers, and we are pleased to see both become the objects of a just castigation. The *Rehearsal*, *Tom Thumb*, and *Chrononhotonthologos*, which exhibit ludicrous parodies of passages from the favourite dramatic writers of the times, convey a great deal of just and useful criticism. If the original is a work of real excellence, the Travesty or Parody detracts nothing from its merit, nor robs the author of the smallest portion of his just praise.¹ We laugh at the association of dignity and meanness; but the former remains the exclusive property of the original, the latter belongs solely to the copy. We give due praise to the mimical powers of the

¹ The occasional blemishes, however, of a good writer, are a fair subject of castigation; and a travesty or burlesque parody of them will please, from the justness of the satire: As the following ludicrous version of a passage in the 5th *Æneid*, which is among the few examples of false taste in the chastest of the Latin Poets:

—*Oculos telumque tetendit.*

—He cock'd his eye and gun.

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imitator, and are delighted to see how ingeniously he can elicit subject of mirth and ridicule from what is grave, dignified, pathetic, or sublime.

In the description of the games in the 5th *Æneid*, Virgil everywhere supports the dignity of the Epic narration. His persons are heroes, their actions are suitable to that character, and we feel our passions seriously interested in the issue of the several contests. The same scenes travestied by Scarron are ludicrous in the extreme. His heroes have the same names, they are engaged in the same actions, they have even a grotesque resemblance in character to their prototypes; but they have all the meanness, rudeness, and vulgarity of ordinary prize-fighters, hackney coachmen, horse-jockeys, and watermen.

*Medio Gyas in gurgite victor
Rectorem navis compellat voce Menætem ;
Quo tantum mihi dexter abis ? huc dirige cursum,
Littus ama, et lævas stringat sine palmula cautes ;
Altum alii teneant. Dixit : sed cæca Menætes
Saxa timens, proram pelagi detorquet ad undas.
Quo diversus abis ? iterum pete saxa, Menæte,
Cum clamore Gyas revocabat.*

Gyas, qui croit que son pilote,
Comme un vieil fou qu'il est, radote,
De ce qu'en mer il s'elargit,
Aussi fort qu'un lion rugit ;
Et s'ecrie, écumant de rage,
Serre, serre donc le rivage,

Fils de putain de Ménétus,
 Serre, ou bien nous somme victus :
 Serre donc, serre à la pareille :
 Ménétus fit la sourde oreille,
 Et s'éloigne toujours du bord,
 Et si pourtant il n'a pas tort :
 Habile qu'il est, il redoute
 Certains rocs, ou l'on ne voit goutte—
 Lors Gyas se met en furie,
 Et de rechef crie et recrie,
 Vieil coyon, pilote enragé,
 Mes ennemis t'ont ils gagé
 Pour m'oter l'honneur de la sorte ?
 Serre, ou que le diable t'emporte,
 Serre le bord, ame de chien :
 Mais au diable, s'il en fait rien.

In Virgil, the prizes are suitable to the dignity
 of the persons who contend for them :

Munera principio ante oculos, circoque locantur
 In medio : sacri tripodes, viridesque coronæ,
 Et palmæ, pretium victoribus ; armaque, et ostro
 Perfusæ vestes, argenti aurique talenta.

In Scarron, the prizes are accommodated to
 the contending parties with equal propriety :

Maitre Eneas faisant le sage, &c.
 Fit apporter une marmite,
 C'étoit un des prix destinés,
 Deux pourpoints fort bien galonnés
 Moitié filet et moitié soye,
 Un sifflet contrefaisant l'oye,
 Un engin pour casser des noix,
 Vingt et quatre assiettes de bois,
 Qu' Eneas allant au fourrage
 Avoit trouvé dans le bagage

Du vénérable Agamemnon :
 Certain auteur a dit que non,
 Comptant la chose d'autre sorte,
 Mais ici fort peu nous importe :
 Une toque de velous gras,
 Un engin à prendre des rats,
 Ouvrage du grand Aristandre,
 Qui savoit bien les rats prendre
 En plus de cinquante façons,
 Et meme en donnoit des leçons :
 Deux tasses d'étain émaillées,
 Deux pantoufles despareillées,
 Dont l'une fut au grand Hector,
 Toutes deux de peau de castor—
 Et plusieurs autres nippes rares, &c.

But this species of composition pleases only in a short specimen. We cannot bear a lengthened work in Travesty. The incongruous association of dignity and meanness excites risibility chiefly from its being unexpected. Cotton's and Scarron's *Virgil* entertain but for a few pages: the composition soon becomes tedious, and at length disgusting. We laugh at a short exhibition of buffoonery ; but we cannot endure a man, who, with good talents, is constantly playing the fool.

There is a species of ludicrous verse translation which is not of the nature of Travesty, and which seems to be regulated by all the laws of serious translation. It is employed upon a ludicrous original, and its purpose is not to burlesque, but to represent it with the utmost fidelity. For that purpose, even the metrical

stanza is closely imitated. The ludicrous effect is heightened, when the stanza is peculiar in its structure, and is transferred from a modern to an ancient language ; as in Dr. Aldrich's translation of the well-known song,

A soldier and a sailor,
A tinker and a tailor,
Once had a doubtful strife, Sir,
To make a maid a wife, Sir,
Whose name was buxom Joan, &c.

*Miles et navigator,
Sartor et ærator,
Jamdudum litigabant,
De pulchra quam amabant,
Nomen cui est Joanna, &c.*

Of the same species of translation is the facetious composition intitled *Ebrii Barnabæ Itinerarium*, or *Drunken Barnaby's Journal* :

*O Faustule, dic amico,
Quo in loco, quo in vico,
Sive campo, sive tecto,
Sine linteo, sine lecto ;
Propinasti queis tabernis,
An in terris, an Avernis.*

Little Fausty, tell thy true heart,
In what region, coast, or new part,
Field or fold, thou hast been bousing,
Without linen, bedding, housing ;
In what tavern, pray thee, show us,
Here on earth, or else below us :

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And the whimsical, though serious translation
of Chevy-chace :

*Vivat Rex noster nobilis,
Omnis in tuto sit ;
Venatus olim flebilis
Chevino luco fit.*

God prosper long our noble King,
Our lives and safeties all :
A woful hunting once there did
In Chevy-chace befall, &c.

CHAPTER XV

THE GENIUS OF THE TRANSLATOR SHOULD BE AKIN TO THAT OF THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR.—THE BEST TRANSLATORS HAVE SHONE IN ORIGINAL COMPOSITION OF THE SAME SPECIES WITH THAT WHICH THEY HAVE TRANSLATED.—OF VOLTAIRE'S TRANSLATIONS FROM SHAKESPEARE.—OF THE PECULIAR CHARACTER OF THE WIT OF VOLTAIRE.—HIS TRANSLATION FROM HUDIBRAS. — EXCELLENT ANONYMOUS FRENCH TRANSLATION OF HUDIBRAS.—TRANSLATION OF RABELAIS BY URQUHART AND MOTTEUX.

FROM the consideration of those general rules of translation which in the foregoing essay I have endeavoured to illustrate, it will appear no unnatural conclusion to assert, that he only is perfectly accomplished for the duty of a translator who possesses a genius akin to that of the original author. I do not mean to carry this proposition so far as to affirm, that in order to give a perfect translation of the works of Cicero, a man must actually be as great an orator, or inherit the same extent of philosophical genius ; but he must have a mind capable of discerning the full merits of his original, of attending with an acute perception to the whole of his reasoning,

and of entering with warmth and energy of feeling into all the beauties of his composition. Thus we shall observe invariably, that the best translators have been those writers who have composed original works of the same species with those which they have translated. The mutilated version which yet remains to us of the *Timæus* of Plato translated by Cicero, is a masterly composition, which, in the opinion of the best judges, rivals the merit of the original. A similar commendation cannot be bestowed on those fragments of the *Phænomena* of Aratus translated into verse by the same author; for Cicero's poetical talents were not remarkable: but who can entertain a doubt, that had time spared to us his versions of the orations of Demosthenes and Æschines, we should have found them possessed of the most transcendent merit?

We have observed, in the preceding part of this essay, that poetical translation is less subjected to restraint than prose translation, and allows more of the freedom of original composition. It will hence follow, that to exercise this freedom with propriety, a translator must have the talent of original composition in poetry; and therefore, that in this species of translation, the possession of a genius akin to that of his author, is more essentially necessary than in any other.) We know the remark of Denham, that the subtle spirit of poesy evaporates entirely in the transfusion from one language into another, and that

unless a new, or an original spirit, is infused by the translator himself, there will remain nothing but a *caput mortuum*. The best translators of poetry, therefore, have been those who have approved their talents in original poetical composition. Dryden, Pope, Addison, Rowe, Tickell, Pitt, Warton, Mason, and Murphy, rank equally high in the list of original poets, as in that of the translators of poetry.

But as poetical composition is various in its kind, and the characters of the different species of poetry are extremely distinct, and often opposite in their nature, it is very evident that the possession of talents adequate to one species of translation, as to one species of original poetry, will not infer the capacity of excelling in other species of which the character is different. Still further, it may be observed, that as there are certain species of poetical composition, as, for example, the dramatic, which, though of the same general character in all nations, will take a strong tincture of difference from the manners of a country, or the peculiar genius of a people ; so it will be found, that a poet, eminent as an original author in his own country, may fail remarkably in attempting to convey, by a translation, an idea of the merits of a foreign work which is tinctured by the national genius of the country which produced it. Of this we have a striking example in those translations from Shakespeare by Voltaire ; in which the French

poet, eminent himself in dramatical composition, intended to convey to his countrymen a just idea of our most celebrated author in the same department. But Shakespeare and Voltaire, though perhaps akin to each other in some of the great features of the mind, were widely distinguished, even by nature, in the characters of their poetical genius; and this natural distinction was still more sensibly increased by the general tone of manners, the *hue and fashion* of thought of their respective countries. Voltaire, in his essay *sur la Tragédie Angloise*, has chosen the famous soliloquy in the tragedy of Hamlet, "*To be, or not to be,*" as one of those striking passages which best exemplify the genius of Shakespeare, and which, in the words of the French author, *demandent grace pour toutes ses fautes*. It may therefore be presumed, that the translator in this instance endeavoured, as far as lay in his power, not only to adopt the spirit of his author, but to represent him as favourably as possible to his countrymen. Yet, how wonderfully has he metamorphosed, how miserably disfigured him! In the original, we have the perfect picture of a mind deeply agitated, giving vent to its feelings in broken starts of utterance, and in language which plainly indicates, that the speaker is reasoning solely with his own mind, and not with any auditor. In the translation, we have a formal and connected harangue, in which it would appear, that the author, offended

with the abrupt manner of the original, and judging those irregular starts of expression to be unsuitable to that precision which is required in abstract reasoning, has corrected, as he thought, those defects of the original, and given union, strength, and precision, to this philosophical argument.

Demeure, il faut choisir, et passer à l'instant
De la vie à la mort, ou de l'être au néant.
Dieux justes, s'il en est, éclairez mon courage.
Faut-il vieillir courbé sous la main qui m'outrage,
Supporter, ou finir mon malheur et mon sort ?
Que suis-je ? qui m'arrête ? et qu'est ce que la mort ?
C'est la fin de nos maux, c'est mon unique azile ;
Après de longs transports, c'est un sommeil tranquille.
On s'endort et tout meurt ; mais un affreux reveil,
Doit succéder peut-être aux douceurs du sommeil.
On nous menace ; on dit que cette courte vie
De tourmens éternels est aussitôt suivie.
O mort ! moment fatale ! affreuse éternité !
Tout cœur à ton seul nom se glace épouvanté.
Eh ! qui pourrait sans toi supporter cette vie ?
De nos prêtres menteurs bénir l'hypocrisie ?
D'une indigne maitresse encenser les erreurs ?
Ramper sous un ministre, adorer ses hauteurs ?
Et montrer les langueurs de son âme abattue,
A des amis ingrats qui détournent la vue ?
La mort serait trop douce en ces extrémités.
Mais le scrupule parle, et nous crie, arrêtez.
Il défend à nos mains cet heureux homicide,
Et d'un héros guerrier, fait un Chrétien timide.¹

¹ To be, or not to be, that is the question :—
Whether 'tis better in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune ;
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,

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Besides the general fault already noticed, of substituting formal and connected reasoning, to the desultory range of thought and abrupt transitions of the original, Voltaire has in this passage, by the looseness of his paraphrase, allowed some of the most striking beauties, both of the thought and expression, entirely to escape ; while he has superadded, with unpardonable licence, several ideas of his own, not only unconnected with the original, but dissonant to the general tenor of the speaker's thoughts, and foreign to his character. Adopting Voltaire's

And by opposing end them ? To die ;—to sleep ;
 No more ?—And by a sleep, to say we end
 The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks
 That flesh is heir to ;—'tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wish'd. To die ;—to sleep ;—
 To sleep ! perchance to dream ;—ay, there's the rub ;
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
 Must give us pause : There's the respect,
 That makes calamity of so long life :
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
 The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
 The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
 The insolence of office, and the spurns
 That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
 When he himself might his quietus make
 With a bare bodkin ? who would fardels bear,
 To groan and sweat under a weary life ;
 But that the dread of something after death—
 That undiscover'd country, from whose bourne
 No traveller returns—puzzles the will ;
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
 Than fly to others that we know not of ? *

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all, &c.

Hamlet, act 3, sc. 1.

own style of criticism on the translations of the Abbé des Fontaines, we may ask him, "Where do we find, in this translation of Hamlet's soliloquy,

"The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune——
To take arms against a sea of troubles——
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to——
Perchance to dream; ay, there's the rub——
The whips and scorns of time——
The law's delay, the insolence of office——
The spurns—that patient merit from th' unworthy
takes——
That undiscover'd country, from whose bourne
No traveller returns——?"

Can Voltaire, who has omitted in this short passage all the above striking peculiarities of thought and expression, be said to have given a translation from Shakespeare?

But in return for what he has retrenched from his author, he has made a liberal addition of several new and original ideas of his own. Hamlet, whose character in Shakespeare exhibits the strongest impressions of religion, who feels these impressions even to a degree of superstition, which influences his conduct in the most important exigences, and renders him weak and irresolute, appears in Mr. Voltaire's translation a thorough sceptic and freethinker. In the course of a few lines, he expresses his doubt of the existence of a God; he treats the priests as

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liars and hypocrites, and the Christian religion as a system which debases human nature, and makes a coward of a hero :

Dieux justes ! S'il en est——
De nos prêtres menteurs bénir l'hypocrisie——
Et d'un héros guerrier, fait un Chrétien timide——

Now, who gave Mr. Voltaire a right thus to transmute the pious and superstitious Hamlet into a modern *philosophe* and *Esprit fort* ? Whether the French author meant by this transmutation to convey to his countrymen a favourable idea of our English bard, we cannot pretend to say ; but we may at least affirm, that he has not conveyed a just one.¹

But what has prevented the translator, who professes that he wished to give a just idea of the merits of his original, from accomplishing what he wished ? Not ignorance of the language ; for Voltaire, though no great critic in the English tongue, had yet a competent knowledge of it ; and the change he has put upon the reader

¹ Other ideas superadded by the translator, are,

Que suis-je——Qui m'arrête？——
On nous menace, on dit que cette courte vie, &c.
——Affreuse éternité !
Tout cœur à ton seul nom se glace épouvanté——
A des amis ingrats qui détournent la vue——

In the *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare*, which is one of the best pieces of criticism in the English language, the reader will find many examples of similar misrepresentation and wilful debasement of our great dramatic poet, in the pretended translations of Voltaire.

was not involuntary, or the effect of ignorance. Neither was it the want of genius, or of poetical talents ; for Voltaire is certainly one of the best poets, and one of the greatest ornaments of the drama. But it was the original difference of his genius and that of Shakespeare, increased by the general opposition of the national character of the French and English. His mind, accustomed to connect all ideas of dramatic sublimity or beauty with regular design and perfect symmetry of composition, could not comprehend this union of the great and beautiful with irregularity of structure and partial disproportion. He was capable indeed of discerning some features of majesty in this colossal statue ; but the rudeness of the parts, and the want of polish in the whole figure, prevailed over the general impression of its grandeur, and presented it altogether to his eye as a monstrous production.

The genius of Voltaire was more akin to that of Dryden, of Waller, of Addison, and of Pope, than to that of Shakespeare : he has therefore succeeded much better in the translations he has given of particular passages from these poets, than in those he has attempted from our great master of the drama.

Voltaire possessed a large share of wit ; but it is of a species peculiar to himself, and which I think has never yet been analysed. It appears to me to be the result of acute philosophical talents, a strong spirit of satire, and a most

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brilliant imagination. As all wit consists in unexpected combinations, the singular union of a philosophic thought with a lively fancy, which is a very uncommon association, seems in general to be the basis of the wit of Voltaire. It is of a very different species from that wit which is associated with humour, which is exercised in presenting odd, extravagant, but natural views of human character, and which forms the essence of ludicrous composition. The novels of Voltaire have no other scope than to illustrate certain philosophical doctrines, or to expose certain philosophical errors ; they are not pictures of life or of manners ; and the persons who figure in them are pure creatures of the imagination, fictitious beings, who have nothing of nature in their composition, and who neither act nor reason like the ordinary race of men. Voltaire, then, with a great deal of wit, seems to have had no talent for humorous composition. Now if such is the character of his original genius, we may presume, that he was not capable of justly estimating in the compositions of others what he did not possess himself. We may likewise fairly conclude, that he should fail in attempting to convey by a translation a just idea of the merits of a work, of which one of the main ingredients is that quality in which he was himself deficient. Of this I proceed to give a strong example. *

In the poem of *Hudibras*, we have a remarkable

combination of Wit with Humour ; nor is it easy to say which of these qualities chiefly predominates in the composition. A proof that humour forms a most capital ingredient is, that the inimitable Hogarth has told the whole story of the poem in a series of characteristic prints : now painting is completely adequate to the representation of humour, but can convey no idea of wit. Of this singular poem, Voltaire has attempted to give a specimen to his countrymen by a translation ; but in this experiment he says he has found it necessary to concentrate the first four hundred lines into little more than eighty of the translation.¹ The truth is, that, either insensible of that part of the merit of the original, or conscious of his own inability to give a just idea of it, he has left out all that constitutes the humour of the painting, and attached himself solely to the wit of the composition. In the original, we have a description of the figure, dress, and accoutrements of Sir Hudibras, which is highly humorous, and which conveys to the imagination as complete a picture as is given by the characteristic etchings of Hogarth. In the translation of Voltaire, all that we learn of those particulars which *paint* the hero, is, that he

¹ Pour faire connoître l'esprit de ce poëme, unique en son genre, il faut retrancher les trois quarts de tout passage qu'on veut traduire ; car ce *Butler* ne finit jamais. J'ai donc réduit à environ quatre-vingt vers les quatre cent premiers vers d'Hudibras, pour éviter la prolixité.' *Mémoires de Philosophie, par Voltaire, Oeuv. tom. 15. Ed. de Geneve. 4to.*

wore mustachios, and rode with a pair of pistols.

Even the wit of the original, in passing through the alembic of Voltaire, has changed in a great measure its nature, and assimilated itself to that which is peculiar to the translator. The wit of Butler is more concentrated, more pointed, and is announced in fewer words, than the wit of Voltaire. The translator, therefore, though he pretends to have abridged four hundred verses into eighty, has in truth effected this by the retrenchment of the wit of his original, and not by the concentration of it: for when we compare any particular passage or point, we find there is more diffusion in the translation than in the original. Thus, Butler says,

The difference was so small, his brain
Outweigh'd his rage but half a grain ;
Which made some take him for a tool
That knaves do work with, call'd a fool.

Thus amplified by Voltaire, and at the same time imperfectly translated.

Mais malgré sa grande éloquence,
Et son mérite, et sa prudence,
Il passa chez quelques savans
Pour être un de ces instrumens
Dont les fripons avec adresse
Savent user sans dire mot,
Et qu' ils tourment avec souplesse ;
Cet instrument s'appelle un sot.

Thus likewise the famous simile of Taliacotius,

loses, by the amplification of the translator, a great portion of its spirit.

So learned Taliacotius from
The brawny part of porter's bum
Cut supplemental noses, which
Would last as long as parent breech ;
But, when the date of nock was out,
Off dropt the sympathetic snout.

Ainsi Taliacotius,
Grand Esculape d'Etrurie,
Répara tous les nez perdus
Par une nouvelle industrie :
Il vous prenoit adroitement
Un morceau du cul d'un pauvre homme,
L'appliquoit au nez proprement ;
Enfin il arrivait qu'en somme,
Tout juste à la mort du prêteur
Tombait le nez de l'emprunteur,
Et souvent dans la même bière,
Par justice et par bon accord,
On remettait au gré du mort
Le nez auprès de son derrière.

It will be allowed, that notwithstanding the supplemental witticism of the translator, contained in the last four lines, the simile loses, upon the whole, very greatly by its diffusion. The following anonymous Latin version of this simile is possessed of much higher merit, as, with equal brevity of expression, it conveys the whole spirit of the original.

*Sic adscititios nasos de clune torosi
Vectoris doctâ secuit Talicotius arte,
Qui potuere parem durando equare parentem :
At postquàm fato clunis computruit, ipsum
Unâ sympathicum cœpit tabescere rostrum.*

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With these translations may be compared the following, which is taken from a complete version of the poem of *Hudibras*, a very remarkable work, with the merits of which (as the book is less known than it deserves to be) I am glad to have this opportunity of making the English reader acquainted :

Ainsi Talicot d'une fesse
Savoit tailler avec adresse
Nez tous neufs, qui ne risquoient rien
Tant que le cul se portoit bien ;
Mais si le cul perdoit la vie,
Le nez tomboit par sympathie.

In one circumstance of this passage no translation can come up to the original : it is in that additional pleasantry which results from the structure of the verses, the first line ending most unexpectedly with a preposition, and the third with a pronoun, both which are the rhyming syllables in the two couplets :

So learned Taliacotius *from*, &c.
Cut supplemental noses, *which*, &c.

It was perhaps impossible to imitate this in a translation ; but setting this circumstance aside, the merit of the latter French version seems to me to approach very near to that of the original.

The author of this translation of the poem of

Hudibras, evidently a man of superior abilities,¹ appears to have been endowed with an uncommon share of modesty. He presents his work to the public with the utmost diffidence; and, in a short preface, humbly deprecates its censure for the presumption that may be imputed to him, in attempting that which the celebrated Voltaire had declared to be one of the most difficult of tasks. Yet this task he has executed in a very masterly manner. A few specimens will shew the high merit of this work, and clearly evince, that the translator possessed that essential requisite for his undertaking, a kindred genius with that of his great original.

The religion of *Hudibras* is thus described :

For his religion, it was fit
To match his learning and his wit :
'Twas Presbyterian true blue ;
For he was of that stubborn crew
Of errant saints, whom all men grant
To be the true church-militant :
Such as do build their faith upon
The holy text of pike and gun ;
Decide all controversies by
Infallible artillery ;
And prove their doctrine orthodox,
By apostolic blows and knocks.

Canto 1.

¹ I have lately learnt, that the author of this translation was Colonel Townley, an English gentleman who had been educated in France, and long in the French service, and who thus had acquired a most intimate knowledge of both languages.

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Sa religion au genie
Et sçavoir étoit assortie ;
Il étoit franc Presbyterien,
Et de sa secte le soutien,
Secte, qui justement se vante
D' être l' Eglise militante ;
Qui de sa foi vous rend raison
Par la bouche de son canon,
Dont le boulet et feu terrible
Montre bien qu'elle est infallible,
Et sa doctrine prouve à tous
Orthodoxe, à force de coups.

In the following passage, the arch ratiocination of the original is happily rivalled in the translation :

For Hudibras wore but one spur,
As wisely knowing could he stir
To active trot one side of's horse,
The other would not hang an a—se.

Car Hudibras avec raison
Ne se chaussoit qu'un éperon,
Ayant preuve démonstrative
Qu'un coté marchant, l'autre arrive.

The language of Sir Hudibras is described as a strange jargon, compounded of English, Greek, and Latin,

Which made some think when he did gabble
They'd heard three labourers of Babel,
Or Cerberus himself pronounce
A leash of languages at once.

It was difficult to do justice in the translation

to the metaphor of Cerberus, by translating *leash of languages*: This, however, is very happily effected by a parallel witticism:

Ce qui pouvoit bien faire accroire
 Quand il parloit à l'auditoire,
 D'entendre encore le bruit mortel
 De trois ouvriers de Babel,
 Ou Cerbere aux ames errantes
 Japper trois langues différentes.

The wit of the following passage is completely transfused, perhaps even heightened in the translation:

For he by geometric scale
 Could take the size of pots of ale;
 Resolve by sines and tangents straight
 If bread or butter wanted weight;
 And wisely tell what hour o' th' day
 The clock does strike, by algebra.

En géometre raffiné
 Un pot de bierre il eut jaugé;
 Par tangente et sinus sur l'heure
 Trouvé le poids de pain ou beurre,
 Et par algebre eut dit aussi
 A quelle heure il sonne midi.

The last specimen I shall give from this work, is Hudibras's consultation with the lawyer, in which the Knight proposes to prosecute Sidrophel in an action of battery:

Quoth he, there is one Sidrophel
 Whom I have cudgell'd—"Very well."—
 And now he brags t'have beaten me.
 "Better and better still, quoth he."—

And vows to stick me to the wall
 Where'er he meets me—"Best of all."—
 'Tis true, the knave has taken's oath
 That I robb'd him—"Well done, in troth."—
 When h' has confessed he stole my cloak,
 And pick'd my fob, and what he took,
 Which was the cause that made me bang him
 And take my goods again—"Marry, hang him."
 —"Sir," quoth the lawyer, "not to flatter ye,
 You have as good and fair a battery
 As heart can wish, and need not shame
 The proudest man alive to claim :
 For if they've us'd you as you say ;
 Marry, quoth I, God give you joy :
 I would it were my case, I'd give
 More than I'll say, or you believe."

Il est, dit-il, de par le monde
 Un Sidrophel, que Dieu confonde,
 Que j'ai rossé des mieux. "Fort bien"—
 Et maintenant il dit, le chien,
 Qu'il m'a battu.—"Bien mieux encore."—
 Et jure, afin qu'on ne l'ignore,
 Que s'il me trouve il me tuera—
 "Le meilleur de tout le voila"—
 Il est vrai que ce misérable
 A fait serment au préalable
 Que moi je l'ai dévalisé—
 "C'est fort bien fait, en verité"—
 Tandis que lui-même il confesse,
 Qu'il m'a volé dans une presse,
 Mon manteau, mon gousset vidé ;
 Et c'est pourquoi je l'ai rossé ;
 Puis mes effets j'ai sçu reprendre—
 "Oui da," dit-il, "il faut le pendre."
 —Dit l'avocat, "sans flatterie,
 Vous avez, Monsieur, batterie

Aussi bonne qu'on puisse avoir ;
Vous devez vous en prévaloir.
S'ils vous ont traité de la sorte,
Comme votre recit le porte,
Je vous en fais mon compliment ;
Je voudrois pour bien de l'argent,
Et plus que vous ne sauriez croire,
Qu'il m'arrivât pareille histoire."

These specimens are sufficient to shew how completely this translator has entered into the spirit of his original, and has thus succeeded in conveying a very perfect idea to his countrymen of one of those works which are most strongly tinged with the peculiarities of national character, and which therefore required a singular coincidence of the talents of the translator with those of the original author.

If the English can boast of any parallel to this, in a version from the French, where the translator has given equal proof of a kindred genius to that of his original, and has as successfully accomplished a task of equal difficulty, it is in the translation of Rabelais, begun by Sir Thomas Urquhart, and finished by Mr. Motteux, and lastly, revised and corrected by Mr. Ozell. The difficulty of translating this work, arises less from its obsolete style, than from a phraseology peculiar to the author, which he seems to have purposely rendered obscure, in order to conceal that satire which he levels both against the civil government and the ecclesiastical policy of his country. Such is the studied

obscurity of this satire, that but a very few of the most learned and acute among his own countrymen have professed to understand Rabelais in the original. The history of the English translation of this work, is in itself a proof of its very high merit. The three first books were translated by Sir Thomas Urquhart, but only two of them were published in his lifetime. Mr. Motteux a Frenchman by birth, but whose long residence in England had given him an equal command of both languages, republished the work of Urquhart, and added the remaining three books translated by himself. In this publication he allows the excellence of the work of his predecessor, whom he declares to have been a complete master of the French language, and to have possessed both learning and fancy equal to the task he undertook. He adds, that he has preserved in his translation "the very style and air of his original ;" and finally, "that the English readers may now understand that author better in their own tongue, than many of the French can do in theirs." The work thus completed in English, was taken up by Mr. Ozell, a person of considerable literary abilities, and who possessed an uncommon knowledge both of the ancient and modern languages. Of the merits of the translation, none could be a better judge, and to these he has given the strongest testimony, by adopting it entirely in his new edition, and limiting his own undertaking

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solely to the correction of the text of Urquhart and Motteux, to which he has added a translation of the notes of M. Du Chat, who spent, as Mr. Ozell informs us, forty years in composing annotations on the original work. The English version of Rabelais thus improved, may be considered, in its present form, as one of the most perfect specimens of the art of translation. The best critics in both languages have borne testimony to its faithful transfusion of the sense, and happy imitation of the style of the original; and every English reader will acknowledge, that it possesses all the ease of original composition. If I have forborne to illustrate any of the rules or precepts of the preceding Essay from this work, my reasons were, that obscurity I have already noticed, which rendered it less fit for the purpose of such illustration, and that strong tincture of licentiousness which characterises the whole work.

APPENDIX

No. I

STANZAS *from* TICKELL'S *Ballad of* COLIN AND LUCY

Translated by LE MIERRE

CHERES compagnes, je vous laisse ;
Une voix semble m'appeller,
Une main que je vois sans cesse
Me fait signe de m'en aller.

L'ingrat que j'avois cru sincère
Me fait mourir, si jeune encor ;
Une plus riche a su lui plaire :
Moi qui l'aimois, voilà mon sort !

Ah Colin ! ah ! que vas tu faire ?
Rends moi mon bien, rends-moi ta foi ;
Et toi que son cœur me préfère
De ses baisers détourne toi.

Dès le matin en épousée
A l'église il te conduira ;
Mais homme faux, fille abusée,
Songez que Lucy sera là.

Filles, portez-moi vers ma fosse ;
Que l'ingrat me rencontre alors,
Lui, dans son bel habit de noce,
Et Lucy sous le drap des morts.

*I hear a voice you cannot hear,
Which says I must not stay ;
I see a hand you cannot see,
Which beckons me away.*

*By a false heart, and broken vows,
In early youth I die ;
Am I to blame, because his bride
Is thrice as rich as I ?*

*Ah Colin, give not her thy vows,
Vows due to me alone ;
Nor thou, fond maid, receive his kiss,
Nor think him all thy own.*

*To-morrow in the church to wed,
Impatient both prepare,
But know, fond maid, and know, false man,
That Lucy will be there.*

*There bear my corse, ye comrades, bear,
The bridegroom blithe to meet ;
He in his wedding-trim so gay,
I in my winding-sheet.*

No. II

ODE V. of the First Book of HORACE

Translated by MILTON

Quis multa gracilis, &c.

WHAT slender youth, bedew'd with liquid odours.
Courts thee on roses in some pleasant cave ?
Pyrrha, for whom bind'st thou
In wreaths thy golden hair,

Plain in thy neatness ? O how oft shall he
On faith and changed Gods complain, and seas
Rough with black winds, and storms
Unwonted, shall admire.

Who now enjoys thee credulous, all gold,
Who always vacant, always amiable,
Hopes thee ; of flattering gales
Unmindful? Hapless they

To whom thou untry'd seem'st fair. Me in my vow'd
Picture the sacred wall declares t'have hung
My dank and dropping weeds
To the stern God of sea.

No. III

The beginning of the VIIIth Book of the ILIAD

Translated by T. HOBBS

THE morning now was quite display'd, and Jove
Upon Olympus' highest top was set ;
And all the Gods and Goddesses above,
By his command, were there together met.
And Jupiter unto them speaking, said,
You Gods all, and you Goddesses, d'ye hear !
Let none of you the Greeks or Trojans aid :
I cannot do my work for you : forbear !
For whomsoever I assisting see
The Argives or the Trojans, be it known,
He wounded shall return, and laught at be,
Or headlong into Tartarus be thrown ;
Into the deepest pit of Tartarus,
Shut in with gates of brass, as much below
The common hell, as 'tis from hell to us.
But if you will my power by trial know,
Put now into my hand a chain of gold,
And let one end thereof lie on the plain,
And all you Gods and Goddesses take hold,
You shall not move me, howsoe'er you strain

At th' other end, if I my strength put to 't,
 I'll pull you Gods and Goddesses to me,
 Do what you can, and earth and sea to boot,
 And let you hang there till my power you see.
 The Gods were out of countenance at this,
 And to such mighty words durst not reply, &c.

No. IV

A VERY learned and ingenious friend,¹ to whom I am indebted for some very just remarks, of which I have availed myself in the preceding Essay, has furnished me with the following acute, and, as I think, satisfactory explanation of a passage in Tacitus, extremely obscure in itself, and concerning the meaning of which the commentators are not agreed. "Tacitus meaning to say, 'That Domitian, wishing to be the great, and indeed the only object in the empire, and that no body should appear with any sort of lustre in it but himself, was exceedingly jealous of the great reputation which Agricola had acquired by his skill in war,' expresses himself thus :

In Vit. Agr. cap. 39

Id sibi maxime formidolosum, privati hominis nomen suprà principis attolli. Frustra studia fori, et civilium artium decus in silentium acta, si militarem gloriam alius occuparet : et cætera utcunque facilius dissimulari, ducis boni imperatoriam virtutem esse. Which Gordon translates thus: 'Terrible above all things it was to him, that the name of a private man should be exalted above that of the Prince. In vain had he driven from the public tribunals all pursuits of popular eloquence

¹ James Edgar, Esq., Commissioner of the Customs, Edinburgh.

and fame, in vain repressed the renown of every civil accomplishment, if any other than himself possessed the glory of excelling in war : Nay, however he might dissemble every other distaste, yet to the person of Emperor properly appertained the virtue and praise of being a great general.'

"This translation is very good, as far as the words 'civil accomplishment,' but what follows is not, in my opinion, the meaning of Tacitus's words, which I would translate thus :

"'If any other than himself should become a great object in the empire, as that man must necessarily be who possesses military glory. For however he might conceal a value for excellence of every other kind, and even affect a contempt of it, yet he could not but allow, that skill in war, and the talents of a great General, were an ornament to the Imperial dignity itself.'

"Domitian did not pretend to any skill in war ; and therefore the word '*alius*' could never be intended to express a competitor with him in it."

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